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THE
CATHEDRAL
FOLK

THE SENTRY

AND OTHER STORIES

by

NICOLAI LYESKOV

With an introduction by EDWARD GARNETT

“Absorbing stories presented artistically and cleanly—sharp, bright, controlled sentences which reveal definite and penetrating scenes of the Russia of the Tsars. The tales are grim, surely, but there is a certain sanity and comprehensibility in their tragedy.”

—*The Chicago Evening Post.*

THE CATHEDRAL FOLK

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN OF

NICOLAI LYESKOV

BY ISABEL F. HAPGOOD



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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Nicolai Semyonovitch Lyeskov was born in the Government of Orel, on February 4th (16th, New Style) 1831, and died on February 21st (March 5th, New Style), 1895.

His innumerable journeys all over Russia, in his capacity of official in different Government Departments, and in connection with his management of great private estates, furnished him with an inexhaustible stock of information as to popular types, customs, and ideas, as well as a richly-coloured vocabulary of remarkably accurate and effective words and turns of expression.

He enjoyed enormous success with the public, although the critics paid little attention to him, because of reasons wholly unconnected with his literary qualities. He is regarded now, however, as superior, in many respects, to the galaxy of great writers with whom the foreign public is now acquainted, while inferior to them in certain other respects. In particular, he is regarded as the most accurate portraitist of national character and types; and that distinction he shares with another official who gathered his knowledge in the same manner.

Lyeskov's early works were signed "M. Stebnitzky."

"The Cathedral Folk,"—his best long novel,—was published in 1872, and ranks as the most noteworthy picture of the Russian priesthood.

ISABEL F. HAPGOOD.



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PART ONE

CHAPTER I

THE people whose manner of life constitutes the subject of this narrative, are inhabitants of the Stáry Górod Cathedral's ecclesiastical quarter. They are—Archpriest Savély Tuberózoff, priest Zakháriya Benefáktoff, and Deacon Akhílla Desnítzin. The early youth of these persons, and the years of their childhood, do not concern us. But if the reader would see these people before him in clear-cut outlines, at the epoch when he is called upon to present them to his imagination, he must picture to himself the chief of the Stáry, Górod clergy, Archpriest Savély Tuberózoff, as a man already past sixty years of age. Father Tuberózoff is tall of stature, and stout, but still very alert and agile. And his spiritual powers are in the same condition: it is evident, at the first glance, that he has preserved all the warmth of heart, and all the energy of youth. His head is extremely handsome: it may even be called a model of manly beauty. Tuberózoff's hair is as thick as the mane of a lion, and white as the curls of Phidias's Jupiter. It rises artistically in a mighty mound above his lofty brow, and descends in three large waves behind, not quite reaching his shoulders. A few black hairs still gleam in the father Archpriest's small mustache and in his beard parted in twain, and give them the appearance of silver decorated with black enamel. The father Archpriest's eyebrows are perfectly black, and sweep away from his decidedly large, and decidedly thick nose like sharply curved Ss. His eyes are light brown, large, bold and clear. All his life long they have never lost their capacity for lighting up with the presence of intellect: in them also, his intimates have beheld the flash of joyous rapture, and clouds of grief, and tears of emotion; in them, also, at times, has blazed the fire of indignation, and they have flashed sparks of wrath—

not the wrath which is frivolous, and disputatious and petty, but the wrath of a great man. Through those eyes has gazed the straightforward, honest soul of Archpriest Savély which he, in his Christian hope, has believed to be immortal.

Zakháriya Benefáktóff, the second priest of the Stáry Górod Cathedral, is of quite a different sort. His whole personality is gentleness and resignation personified. His gentle spirit has little desire to assert itself, and his tiny body takes up very little space, in entire correspondence therewith, seeming anxious not to burden the earth with its weight. He is small, thin, weak, and bald. Two tiny curls of greyish-yellow hair float over his ears only. He has no queue at all.¹ The last remnants of it vanished long ago; and, anyway, his queue was such a wretched affair that Deacon Akhílla has never alluded to it otherwise than as "the rat's tail." Instead of a beard, Father Zakháriya appears to have glued on a bit of sponge. His little hands are like those of a child, and he is constantly hiding them, tucking them in the pockets of his under-cassock. His little legs are weak and thin—the sort known as "straw-legs"; and altogether, he looks as though he were plaited out of straw. His extremely kind, little grey eyes have a brisk glance, but he raises them very seldom, and on such occasions, they immediately seek a place where they may conceal themselves from an indiscreet glance. Father Zakháriya is a little older than Father Tuberózoff, and considerably more infirm than he; but he, like the archpriest, has become accustomed to maintain an alert mien, and throughout all the sicknesses and infirmities with which he has been visited, he has preserved a lively soul and bodily alertness.

The third and last representative of the Stáry Górod Cathedral clergy, Deacon Akhílla, had several definitions, which it will not be superfluous to mention here, in order that by their aid, we may somewhat the more conveniently depict the mighty Akhílla to the reader.

¹ Russian priests (and monks) wear their hair long, and, in private life, often braid it in a queue to keep it out of the way. TRANSLATOR.

The Inspector of the Theological School, who dropped Akhílla Desnítzin from the class in syntax because of his "great size and small success," said to him:

"Ekh, you blockhead, how long you're built!"

The Rector, who, by special intercession, admitted Akhílla to the class again, was amazed, when he gazed at that epic hero in process of growth, and astonished at his size, strength and dulness, said:

"It is insufficient, I think, to call you an oaken cudgel,¹ seeing that, in my eyes, you are a whole cartload of wood."

And the regent of the Archbishop's choir, which Akhílla Desnítzin entered when he was withdrawn from rhetoric and enrolled in an ecclesiastical post, called him "excessive."

"Your bass is good," said the choir-master; "it's like the discharge of a cannon; but you're dreadfully excessive, and because of that excessiveness I really don't know properly how to treat you."

The fourth and most weighty of the definitions of Deacon Akhílla's character was made by the Archbishop himself, and that on a day very memorable for Akhílla, namely on the day when he, Akhílla, was expelled from the archiepiscopal choir, and exiled to serve as deacon in Stáry Górod. According to that definition, Deacon Akhílla was designated as "wounded." It is fitting that we should narrate at this point on what grounds this last appellation of "the wounded man" was appropriately applied to him.

Deacon Akhílla, from his very earliest youth, had been a very merry, facetious person, and one, moreover, who let his feelings run away with him to an unlimited degree. And not only did he know no bounds to his impulses in his youth, but we shall see whether he knew any bounds to them in the years of his approaching old age.

In spite of the "excessiveness" of his bass voice, Akhílla was highly prized in the Archbishop's choir, where he took

¹ DUBINA means, primarily, an oaken cudgel; figuratively, a block-head. TRANSLATOR.

the highest note in the treble, and descended below the very lowest note at the bottom. The thing which the choir-master dreaded in the excessive Akhílla, was his "impulsiveness." Thus, for example, in the Vigil Service, he never could confine himself to chanting "Holy is the Lord our God" thrice only, but not infrequently he gave way to his enthusiasm and sang it all alone by himself four times; and, in particular, he never could manage to stop chanting the "Many Years" at the proper point.¹ But in all these cases, which were already familiar, and which could be foreseen, measures of precaution were prudently taken against Akhílla's "impulsiveness," which protected even the deacon, and his vocal commanders from his attacks: to one of the adult singers was confided the task of tugging at the skirts of Akhílla's choir-vestment, or pulling him down bodily, by the shoulders, at the proper moment. But not without good reason was the proverb invented, that accidents will happen even in the best-regulated families. In spite of the care and affection with which Akhílla was protected against his impulsiveness, still, they could not save him from it altogether, and he presented a most striking illustration of that theoretical situation stated in the saying: "he who is doomed to destruction, bears within himself the enemy." On one of the twelve Great Feasts, Akhílla, while executing the Communion anthem, was to sing an extremely artful bass solo on the words: "and wounded with grief." The importance which the choir-master and the entire choir attached to that solo inspired Akhílla with much anxiety. He was uneasy, and carefully meditated how he might avoid disgracing himself and distinguish himself before the Archbishop, who was fond of church singing, and in the eyes of the aristocracy of the Government, which would assemble on that occasion. And justice requires us to state, that Akhílla learned his solo magnificently. Day and night he paced his chamber, or the corridor, or the court-yard, or the Archbishop's garden, or the

¹ That is, "Long Life", sung on special occasions, for the Emperor, Holy Synod, Archbishop and (sometimes) a particular person who is being honoured. TRANSLATORS.

pastures outside the town, chanting, all the while, in various keys: "wounded, wounded, wounded," and in such incessant practice passed the time until, at last, the day of his glory dawned, when he was to sing his "wounded" before the entire cathedral. The anthem began. Heavens! how grand and brilliantly beaming was the huge Akhílla, as he stood with his music in his hand! He ought to be painted—no pen can adequately depict him. . . . Now came the familiar preludes, and the place for the bass solo arrives. Akhílla thrusts his neighbour aside with his elbow, and silently beats time for his solo "wounded," and awaiting his cue, beholds the choir-master's hand raised with its tuning-fork. . . . Akhílla forgot the whole world, and himself and, in most amazing fashion, like the archangel's trumpet, he chanted now swiftly, now slowly: "And he was wounded with grief, wounded, w-o-u-n-d-e-d, w-o-u-n-d-e-d, wounded." They headed off by force Akhílla's superfluous repetitions, which had been foreseen, and the anthem came to an end. But it was not ended in the "impulsive" head of Akhílla: and into the midst of the quiet greetings which the aristocracy offered to the Archbishop as they came forward for his blessing like a trumpet voice from heaven, there suddenly fell again from the choir: "Wounded, wo-und-ed, w-o-u-n-d-e-d." It was Akhílla, singing thus in his enthusiasm, and quite unconscious of his action. They tugged at him; he sang on; they pulled him down; they tried to hide him behind the backs of his comrades; he sang on: "wounded." At last they led him out of the church, but still he sang: "w-o-u-n-d-e-d."

"What's the matter with you?" compassionate people asked him sympathetically. "Wounded" sang Akhílla, staring them straight in the eyes; and there he stood, at the door of the porch, until the streams of fresh air sobered him from his exaltation.

In comparison with Archpriest Tuberózoff and Father Benefáktoff, Akhílla Desnítzen may be called a young man; but he is far over forty, and through his pitch-black curls run good-sized streaks of silver. Akhílla is huge in size,

terrible in strength, awkward and abrupt in manner, but notwithstanding all this, extremely agreeable; he has the southern type of countenance, and says that he descends from the kazáks of Little Russia, from whom, in fact, he appears to have inherited his heedlessness, his bravery and many other kazák virtues.

CHAPTER II

ALL these heroes of old-fashioned cut dwelt in the Stáry Górod clergy quarter, on the quiet, navigable river Túritza. Each one of them—Tuberózoff, Zakháriya, and even Deacon Akhílla—had his own little house, on the very brink of the river, directly opposite the ancient cathedral, with its five tall cupolas, which towered aloft on the opposite bank. Father Savély's little house was very pretty, painted light-blue in oils, with little stars, squares and bow-knots of divers hues nailed up over each of his three windows. These windows were surrounded by carved and brilliantly-coloured frames and had green shutters which were never closed, because in winter the sturdy little house did not fear the cold, and the father archpriest loved the light, loved the star which peeped by night from the sky into his chamber, loved the moonbeams, which lay upon his parquet floor like a strip of cloth of silver.

In the father archpriest's house everything was beautifully clean and orderly, for he had no one to muss or soil or disorder things. He was childless, and this constituted one of the permanent sorrows of himself and his archpriestess.

Father Zakháriya Benefáktoff's little house was much larger than Father Tuberózoff's; but in the Benefáktoff cottage, there was none of the foppishness and coquetry with which the archpriest's dwelling shone so brilliantly. Father Zakháriya's little house, five-windowed and slanting somewhat out of the perpendicular, more resembled a poultry-house; and, to complete its likeness with that establishment, at all the bars of its tiny green windows various tiny noses and forelocks were constantly jostling one another, pushing one another aside, and following one another. They were

all the posterity of Father Zakháriya, whom God had blessed like unto Jacob, and whose wife He had multiplied like unto Rachel. Neither the mirror-like cleanliness, nor the strict orderliness of the archpriest's house reigned in Father Zakháriya's dwelling. Over everything here lay marks of dirty little childish paws. From every corner peered forth a childish head and the whole place was swarming with children, and squeaking and singing with children, beginning with the crickets who lived behind the stove, and ending with the mother, who lulled her offspring with the cradle-song:

"Children, my children!
Where shall I put you?
What shall I do with you?"

Deacon Akhílla was a widower and childish, and bothered himself not in the slightest about acquiring household goods or about household management. He had a little Russian plastered cottage on the very brink of the river, but there were no outbuildings attached to this cottage, and it had no hedges. In a word, there was nothing, with the exception of a small farm-yard enclosed in a picket fence, wherein knee-deep in straw roamed now a piebald stallion, now a bay gelding, and again a coal-black mare. The furnishing of Akhílla's house was also purely of the kazák type: in its best room, appropriated to the use of the owner, stood a wooden couch with a lattice-work back; this little couch served Akhílla as a bed, and therefore was spread with a thin white kazák felt, and at the head lay a chased Asiatic saddle bow, against which leaned a tiny, pancake-like pillow in a greasy nankeen case. In front of this kazák bed stood a white linden-wood table, and on the wall hung a stringless guitar, a lasso of hempen rope, a kazák whip (*nagáika*), and two braided snaffle-bridles. In one corner, on a small shelf, stood a tiny holy picture of the Falling-Asleep of the Virgin (Assumption), with a withered branch of pussy-willows stuck behind it, and a very small Kieff book of devotions. There was absolutely nothing else

in the dwelling of deacon Akhílla. In a tiny lean-to for cooking alongside dwelt the former chambermaid of a landed proprietor's household, Nadézhda Stepánovna, who was called Espérance.

This Espérance was elderly, small, yellow, sharp-featured and wrinkled, and had a temper so intractable and unbearable, that in spite of her "golden hands," she could not find a place anywhere, and had come to be the servant of the wifeless Akhílla, at whom she could chatter and snarl to her heart's content, for he never noticed either her chattering or snarling, and was wont to put a stop to the most extreme irritations of his old serving-woman at decisive moments with a thunderous: "Espérance, the deuce take you!" After such words, Espérance generally vanished, for she knew that otherwise Akhílla would seize her by the arms, seat her on the roof of his cottage, and leave her there, from dawn to dawn, without respite. In view of this terrible punishment, Espérance was afraid to contradict her kazák-master.

All these people lived the same life, and all of them, more or less, bore one another's burdens and provided the scanty variety of life for one another. Father Savély stood at the head, by his position; his little archpriestess revered him, and her whole soul was wrapped up in him. Father Zakháriya, also, was happy in his hen-house. Neither did deacon Akhílla complain of anything, for he passed all his days in chatting and roaming about the town, or in riding and swapping his horses; or, in conclusion, at times, in tormenting and taming his "serving-woman Espérance."

Savély, Zakháriya and Akhílla were friends, but, of course, it would be highly unjust to assume that they did not make efforts to vary their life by those scenes of slight enmity and misunderstanding, which beneficially arouse the natures of men lulled by the inactivity of provincial existence. No, there was something of that sort here also; and the pages of Tuberózoff's diary which await us will lay bare to us many petty details which did not appear petty to those who endured, wrestled with and overcame them. There were mis-

understandings among them, also. Thus, for example, one day the landed proprietor and local Marshal of the Nobility, Alexéi Nikítitch Plodomásoff, on his return from St. Petersburg, brought thence for the members of the cathedral clergy of whom he was fond, divers more or less valuable gifts, and among the rest, three walking-sticks: two with heads exactly alike of ducat-gold for the priests—that is to say, one for Father Tuberózoff, and the other for Father Zakháriya; and the third, with a handsome silver head with black enamel, for deacon Akhílla. These walking-sticks fell among the clergy of Stáry Górod like the Biblical serpents which the Egyptian sorcerers cast before Pharaoh.

“By this gift of walking-sticks doubt is brought upon us,” remarked deacon Akhílla.

“Why, wherein do you espy doubt, father deacon?” asked those to whom he made complaint.

“Ah, but you laymen understand nothing about it, so don’t you assert that there is no doubt,” retorted the deacon: “No, sir! there’s great doubt!” And the deacon began to set forth this special grievance.

“In the first place,” said he, “I, being a deacon, am not permitted, by my rank, to carry such a walking-stick, and it’s not fitting either, because I am not a pastor—that’s one. I repeat—I now carry that stick because it was given to me—that makes two. And, in the third place, the identity of value is what makes this whole thing doubtful: what was given to Father Savély was also given to Father Zakháriya,—walking-sticks identically alike. Why make them equal in that manner? . . . Ah, for mercy’s sake, tell me why?—Father Savély—you yourselves know . . . Father Savély . . . he’s a clever man, a philosopher, a minister of justice, but now I perceive that he cannot understand, and he’s disturbed—greatly disturbed, in fact.”

“Why, what is there to disturb him in that, father deacon?”

“He’s disturbed, in the first place, because from that absolute identity arises confusion. How do you suppose they are going to distinguish which stick is whose? Please to sort

them out now—which is the father archpriest's and which is Father Zakháriya's? But let us assume, that for the purpose of telling them apart some little mark may be applied—either sealing-wax might be dropped beneath the knob, or, a little cut might be made in the wood with a knife. But what will you do with them in regard to policy? How can you take away now the value or dignity of one of them compared with the other, when they are of equal value? Now, if you please, it is impossible that the father archpriest and Father Zakháriya should be of equal value. That's not proper order, sir! And the father archpriest feels it, and I see it, and I say: 'Father Archpriest, there's nothing else to be done in this matter, so if you will permit me, I will put a little sealing-wax or make a little gash on Father Zakháriya's stick.'—But he says: 'It is unnecessary! Don't you dare, and I won't permit it!' 'Why isn't it necessary? Well,' I said, 'give me your blessing: I'll cut Father Zakháriya's stick off with a knife a couple of inches shorter than yours, secretly, without his knowing it, so that Father Zakháriya will not notice the shortening.' But he said again: 'You are stupid!' said he. . . . Well, if I'm stupid then I am stupid, and this is not the first time I've heard that from him, but I don't take offence at it from him, for he deserves that one should endure it from him; but I see, nevertheless, that he is displeased with all this, and it makes me very uneasy. . . . And now you will tell me that I am thrice stupid!" exclaimed the deacon, "Yes, sir, I permit it; tell me if I am stupid, if he, Father Savély, does not do something crafty. I am perfectly positive that although he will not allow me to do anything, he will employ some subtlety himself."

And, apparently, deacon Akhílla was not mistaken. A month had not elapsed since the walking-sticks alluded to, which had aroused doubt, were presented to the clergy of the Stáry Górod cathedral, when father archpriest Savély suddenly began to make preparations to visit the capital of the Government. There was no necessity for attributing any

special significance to this trip of Father Tuberózoff, because the archpriest, in his capacity of Ecclesiastical Superintendent of the district frequently attended the Consistory. And no one did discuss the reason of the archpriest's journey. But lo and behold, after Father Tuberózoff had already taken his seat in his kibitka, he suddenly turned to Father Zakháriya who was seeing him off, and said:

"By the way, see here, father, where is your walking-stick? Just give it to me, and I will take it to town."

This simple address, with the remark uttered unexpectedly, as it were, suddenly seemed to shed a flood of light into the minds of all the people who were seeing Father Savély off from his gate.

Deacon Akhílla was the first to grunt on the spot and whispered in the ear of Father Benefáktoff:

"Well, sir! Didn't I tell you: there's craft for you!"

"But why carry my stick to town, Father Archpriest?" inquired Father Zakháriya submissively winking his eyes, as he thrust the deacon aside.

"Why? Why, perhaps I will show them there, how people respect and remember you and me," replied Tuberózoff.

"Aliósha, run and bring my staff," and Father Zakháriya sent his little son home.

"Perhaps you would like to show off my stick too, Father Archpriest?" inquired Akhílla in the gentlest tone he could manage.

"No, keep yours in front of you," replied Father Savély.

"What do you mean by 'in front of you,' Father Archpriest? Surely, I was just like . . . I also was honoured with the attention of the Marshal of Nobility," replied the deacon, somewhat offended.

But the Father Archpriest did not deign any reply to his pretensions, and laying Father Zakháriya's stick—which had been handed to him in the meantime—by his side, he drove away.

Tuberózoff drove away, and with him went the two sticks which had caused confusion, while deacon Akhílla, left at

home, worried himself over the solution of the puzzle: Why had Tuberózoff taken away the walking-stick from Zakháriya?

"Come now, what is that to you? What does it matter to you? What have you to do with it?" Zakháriya stopped the fretting deacon.

"Father Zakháriya, I tell you that he is using craft."

"Well, and if he is, what business is it of yours? Come, now, let him be crafty if he likes."

"But I am intolerably curious to foresee in what it will consist. He wouldn't let me cut off your stick—he said it was stupid; I advised him to apply a mark, and he rejected that suggestion also. The only thing I can foresee . . ."

"Come, come, come, what can you foresee, you uneasy creature?"

"The only thing is . . . that he will certainly have a precious stone inserted."

"Yes! come . . . come now, where would he have a precious stone inserted?"

"In the handle."

"Well, and in his, or in mine?"

"In his own, of course, in his own. A precious stone is a valuable thing, you see."

"Well then, and in that case, why did he take my stick? He will have a stone put in his, but what does he want with mine?"

The deacon smote his brow with his hand, and exclaimed:

"I've made a fool of myself!"

"I hope, I hope you have," assented father Zakháriya, adding with gentle reproach: "and yet you have studied logic, my dear fellow; shame on you!"

"Why is it shame on me, when I studied it but could not understand it! That may happen to any one," replied the deacon, and without giving utterance to any further guesses, he continued secretly to burn with curiosity as to what would happen.

A week passed, and the father archpriest returned. Akhílla the deacon, who was engaged at the time in breaking in a

horse of the steppe which he had become possessed of through a barter, was the first to perceive the archpriest's black kibitka approaching the town, and flew through all the streets, halting before the open windows of houses where he was acquainted, and shouting: "He's coming! Savély! Our great priest is coming!" Suddenly a new idea occurred to Akhílla.

"Now I know what it is," he said to the people about him, who had hastened to the archpriest's gate.—"All these preliminary reflections of mine, up to this point, have been merely my stupidity; but now I can tell you, of a surety, that the father archpriest has done nothing except simply to order that Greek initials be engraved—or if not Greek, then Latin. That's it, that's it, and nothing else; it's a fact that he had the initials engraved, and if I have not guessed it now, then after this you may call me a hundred-fold fool."

"Wait, wait and we'll call you that, so we will!" said father Zakháriya in reply, speaking rapidly in view of the fact that the archpriest's kibitka was already halting at the gate.

The father archpriest alighted from his kibitka dignified and grave. He entered the house, prayed before the holy pictures, greeted his wife, kissing her thrice on the mouth, then greeted father Zakháriya, the two men kissing each other on the shoulder, and finally deacon Akhílla, when deacon Akhílla kissed the father archpriest's hand and the father archpriest applied his lips to Akhílla's temple. After this greeting began tea-drinking, conversation, the narration of the news of the Government, and evening yielded place to night—but the father archpriest never uttered a single word about the walking-sticks in which every one was so much interested. One day, two days, three days passed, but father Tuberózoff did not allude to the subject; just as though he had carried the two sticks to the Government capital and there dropped them into the river, so that there should be no further talk about them.

"You might at least show some curiosity! Inquire!" the impatient deacon Akhilla kept incessantly nagging Father Zakháriya all through those days.

"What am I to ask him?" replied Father Zakháriya. "Don't I trust him, pray, that I should demand an accounting from him, as to what he has done with it?"

"Yes, but all the same, for the sake of finding out, you ought to ask."

"Well then, ask him yourself, you nagger, if you wish it for the sake of knowing."

"Yes, by heavens, you won't ask him because you're afraid of him."

"Why am I afraid of him?"

"Well, you simply are afraid; but I'd ask, by heaven I would. And what is there to fear, anyway? Simply inquire: 'Well, and how about our sticks, Father Archpriest?' It's only fear that prevents you."

"Well, then go ask for yourself."

"But I can't."

"And why can't you?"

"He might put me out of countenance."

"And do you mean to say he couldn't do the same to me?"

The deacon was simply burning up with curiosity, and did not know what plan to invent so that he might turn the conversation on the walking-sticks; but, lo! to his joy, the affair settled itself naturally. On the fifth or sixth day after his return home, Father Savély, after having celebrated the late Liturgy, invited the Prefect, the Inspector of Schools, and the Doctor and Father Zakháriya, and Deacon Akhilla to drink tea with him, and began again to tell what he had heard and what he had seen in the Government capital. First of all, the father archpriest spoke at some length about the new buildings, and next about the Governor, whom he condemned for lack of respect towards the Archbishop, and for constructing water-pipes, or, as the father archpriest expressed himself, "acqueducts."

"These acqueducts," said the father archpriest, "will be

of no use, for the town is small, and, moreover, is intersected with three rivers; but the shops, which are being opened afresh all the time, are beginning to display some very elegant things. And now I will show you something connected with the present art there . . .”

And with these words, the father archpriest went into the side room, and in a few minutes returned thence holding one of the sticks, so well known to all present, in each hand.

“Here you see,” he said, raising to the eyes of his guests the upper table of the golden heads.

Akhilla the deacon stared with all his might to see what had been done by the crafty Savély to make a distinction between the equally-valuable sticks; but, alas! no very striking difference was perceptible. On the contrary, the identity of their value seemed even to have been increased, for in the middle of the knob of each stick, there was engraved an exactly similar all-seeing eye surrounded by a halo of rays; and around the eye, like an ornamental border, ran an interlaced inscription.

“And are there no initials, father archpriest?” remarked Akhilla, unable to restrain his impatience.

“What would you have initials here for?” replied Tuberózoff, without looking at him.

“Why, to make a distinction in their equal value!”

“You are always interfering with nonsense,” remarked the father archpriest to the deacon, and then, clasping one of the sticks to his breast, he said: “This one shall be mine.”

Deacon Akhilla cast a swift glance at the knob, and read, round about the all-seeing eye: “The rod of Aaron blossomed.”

“And this one, father Zakháriya, shall be yours,” wound up the archpriest, giving the other stick to Zakháriya.

Upon this one, round about an identically similar all-seeing eye, was engraved: “He gave into his hand a staff.”

No sooner had Akhilla read this second inscription, than he fell down behind Father Zakháriya’s back, butted his head into the doctor’s stomach, gave way to a roar of laughter,

and squirmed in the throes of inextinguishable mirth.

"Come now, what is it, nagger, what is the matter, what?" repeated Father Zakháriya in rapid succession, as he turned towards him, while the other guests were still scrutinizing the ingenious work of the engraver on the staves of the priests. "Initials? Ah! Initials, you curly-headed ram? Where are there any initials here?"

But the deacon not only was not in the least abashed, but he gave another wild halloo, and fairly rolled with laughter.

"What are you laughing at? Why are you dying of laughter?"

"Who turns out to be the fool now?" inquired the deacon, hardly able to utter the words.

"Why, you, of course, you. Who else is a fool?"

Akhílla went off into fresh peals of laughter, waved his arms, and seizing Father Zakháriya by the shoulders, almost sat down upon him, bear fashion, and began to trumpet out:

"Come now, Father Zakháriya, since you have studied logic a lot, just you read this: 'He gave into his hand a staff'—Come now, decide, by logic: What does such an inscription signify?"

"What does it signify? Come, tell us—what?"

"What does it signify, sir?" the deacon proceeded more slowly, "that he has been given a whipping on the hand with a ruler."

"You are talking nonsense."

"I'm talking nonsense! But why is there 'the rod blossomed' on his yonder? But there is nothing said, I think, about its being given into his hand? Why? Because this was done for his pre-eminence, but this is scrawled for you—to humiliate you—as much as to say that the stick has been laid on your paw."

Father Zakháriya wanted to retort, but, truth to tell, he was slightly disturbed. The deacon triumphed at having caused this disturbance in gentle Father Benefáktoff, but Akhílla's triumph was not of long duration.

Before he had succeeded in looking well about him, he perceived that the father archpriest was gazing intently at him with all his might, and no sooner did the latter see that the deacon was sufficiently abashed, than he turned to his guests, and in the most tranquil tone possible, began:

"I did not myself devise these inscriptions which you see, but the secretary of the Consistory, Afanásy Ivánovitch advised me to have them. As he and I were taking a stroll towards evening, we chanced to enter a goldsmith's shop together and Afanásy Ivánovitch said: 'See here now, Father Archpriest, an idea has struck me: you ought to have this inscription on your walking-stick: "The Rod of Aaron," and this other one is very suitable for Father Zakháriya, with its present meaning.'"

"As for you, Father Deacon. . . . I thought of mentioning your stick also, as you requested me, but I have decided that the very best thing is that you should not presume to walk with it at all, because it does not belong to your rank. . . ."

Thereupon, the father archpriest calmly walked to the corner, where stood Akhílla's famous staff, took it, and locked it up in his wardrobe.

Such was the greatest of the dissensions among the clergy of Stáry Górod.

"This," the deacon was wont to say, "was the whole beginning of my maladies. Because at that time I did not endure in patience, but waxed angry, and father archpriest Savély began to humiliate me still more with his craft, and drove me even to fury. I raged, and he transfixed me with that craft of his like a bear on a boar-spear, until I even began to grow like Satan."

This is a specimen of the pettiness displayed, in his old age, by Archpriest Savély, and of the light-mindedness of the deacon, which drew down upon him the wrath of Tuberózoff: but as the burning of Moscow was brought about, they say, by a farthing candle, even so, this affair among the Stáry Górod clergy was the beginning of a whole history,

which brought to the front divers defects and excellences in the characters of Savély and Akhílla.

The deacon was best acquainted of all with this story, but was wont to narrate it only in moments of extreme agitation, in hours of distraction, repentance and uneasiness, and therefore, when he alluded to it, he spoke not infrequently with tears in his eyes, with quavers in his voice, and often with sobs.

CHAPTER III

“**W**HAT, as I see things now, of course,” the excited Akhilla was wont to say, through his tears—“what ought I to have done? I ought to have fallen at the feet of the father archpriest, and said, ‘this was the way things were; I didn’t say that in malice, or spite, Father Archpriest, but simply for the purpose of proving to Father Zakháriya that, although I have no logic, I am no-wise stupider than he.’ I was vexed at his locking my stick up in his cupboard and then after that, Varnávka Prepótsky, the teacher, came along and spoiled things. . . . Ah, I can tell you, that angry as I am with myself, I’m twice as angry with teacher Varnávka! Well, I shall not be myself if I die without having paid off that teacher Varnávka, the altar-bread baker’s son!”

“Don’t you dare to try that again!” Father Zakháriya would stop Akhilla.

“Why shouldn’t I dare? Won’t I dare, because of his impiety? Come now, you must excuse me!”

“Don’t you dare, not even for his impiety, and don’t you dare to fight for him, for though Varnávka is the son of the altar-bread baker, yet now he is an official, he is a teacher.”

“And what’s a teacher, pray? Yes, and I’ll dress down any one you please to mention for godlessness. That’s the law, Father, and nothing else. Yes, sir; that’s very easily managed: I twisted his arm in its socket as hard as possible, gave it a good shake, and then let him loose, and told him to go and complain of having been thrashed for his godlessness by an ecclesiastic. . . . He won’t go and complain anywhere, sir! But oh, my God, my God! when I recall, when I think of what happened to me then, because I listened to

that good-for-nothing Varnávka, and that even to this day I haven't yet got satisfaction out of him as is proper! By heaven, I really don't know where I get such weakness. Now there was that time when I instantly thrashed Sergyéi the sexton for arguing about the thunder; and then, again, I pulled the ears of commissary Danílka, the commoner, implacably and publicly, for eating eggs on the street last Lent, and yet I've let that altar-bread baker's son go free up to the present moment, though I am more wounded by that Varnávka than all the rest! If it hadn't been for him that row would not have taken place. The father archpriest would have been angry with me for my conversation with Father Zakháriya, but that would not have lasted long. But you can see for yourself now, how that Varnávka, the altar-bread baker's son, teacher of mathematics in the district college, egged me on exasperated and wounded as I was: 'why,' says he, 'that inscription of Tuberózoff is stupid, to boot.' And I, you know, feeling hurt myself, was awfully eager to hurt Father Savély in some way also, and I asked: 'How is it stupid?' And Varnávka replies: 'It's stupid because the very fact which it proclaims isn't authentic; and it not only isn't authentic, but it's incredible too. Who bears witness,' says he, 'that Aaron's rod blossomed? Can dry wood put forth flowers?' At that point I tried to stop him, and said: 'Please don't say that, Varnávka Vasilievitch, because God conquereth the order of Nature wheresoever it pleaseth Him. But all my quarrels with Mrs. Biziúkhin, the excise-officer's wife, came from that, and all those libations there, and all the wine was good; everything was *haut-haut*, *haut-sauterne*, and *haut-margaux*, and I . . . devil take me, I got intoxicated. I was in the fumes of liquor, you understand, and Varnávka, you know, instigated me after his fashion, the scientific fashion, and said that 'then MANI-FAKEL-FARES was written at Belshazzar's feast, but now,' he said 'that's nonsense, you know; I can write the same thing for you this very moment with a phosphorus match,' said he. I was horrified; but he went on further and worse: 'And all

through the whole thing,' says he, 'there's an immense number of contradictions. . . .' And he kept on, and on, you know, and overthrew everything; and I sat there and listened to it all. And then again there was more of those *haut-margaux*, and I got to feeling pretty thoroughly wounded, and began to talk in a free-thinking way myself. And I said: 'if it wasn't that I have seen Father Savély's uprightness, for I know that he stands righteously before the altar, and his sacrifice ascends straight upwards, just as Abel's did, and if it wasn't that I don't want to be a Cain, then I'd give it to him!' . . . I said that about Father Savély, you know! And why did I begin to talk about him at that time? Now, wasn't I an idiot? Well, and she, that Dánka Nefálimka, that Mrs. Biziúkin, she says: 'But do you understand what you are babbling? Do you know the value of that Cain? what's that Abel of yours,' says she. 'He is nothing but a wretched little snipe. He was a slavish suppliant, but Cain was a proud and active man,—he didn't reconcile himself to life against his will. See here,' says she, 'this is the way the English writer Byron depicts him . . .' And she went on and described him to me, sir! Well, and at the same time they kept on plying me with those *haut-margaux* and then, all of a sudden, I felt that I wanted to be Cain, and done with it. I set out thence for my home, and reached the father archpriest's house, and stood in front of his windows, and suddenly I stuck my hands on my sides, officer-fashion, and began to shout: 'I'm a Tzar, I'm a slave, I'm a worm, I'm a god!' O, heavens, my heavens, how terrible it is to recall how shameless I was, and how disgusted and wounded I was along at that time! The father archpriest, on hearing my goat-shout, sprang out of bed, came to the window in his night-shirt, and throwing open the sash, growled out: 'Go to sleep, you mad Cain!' Will you believe it, I fairly trembled all over at that word—that I was 'Cain,' because, just imagine, I was only getting ready to be Cain, and he had already foreseen it! Ah, O, God! I went back to my house, not knowing how I got

there, and all my refractoriness vanished on the spot, and from that time to the present day, I have done nothing but grieve and groan."

After he had repeated this tale, the deacon generally fell into thought, hung his head, and after a moment, heaving a sigh, he proceeded in a sad and gentle voice:

"But, you see, sir, the days flee and flow away, but the father archpriest's wrath does not pass off, up to the present time. I went and confessed my fault: I took the whole blame on myself, and repented, and said: 'Forgive me, as God forgives sinners,' but I got only one answer to it all: 'Go away.' Whither? I ask, whither shall I go? The wife of postmaster Timókhin is for ever advising me: 'Go to a regiment, Father Deacon; the soldiers will love you.' I know that it is very probable the soldiers will love me, because I'm almost a warrior myself; but will you please to judge what will become of me in the army? Why, there with them, in a regiment, I shall actually become Cain. . . . For don't I know, don't I know it, that Father Savely and, HE alone, is the only person who can keep me in subordination?—but he . . . but he. . ."

At these words tears dropped upon the deacon's breast, and he wound up, sobbing:

"And just think what a mean trick he has invented for me: he keeps silent! No matter what I say, he holds his tongue. . . . Why are you silent?" cried the deacon, suddenly beginning to weep outright, and turning, with uplifted arms towards the quarter in which the father archpriest's house was supposed to stand. "Do you think it is a nice thing to do? Is it well that I, in discharging my office of deacon, approach him and say: 'Bless, father,' and kiss his hand, and feel that his hand is cold for me! Is that nice? On Trinity Day, before the Great Litany all bathed in tears, I besought: 'bless me. . . .' But even then he had no compassion. 'Blessed be thou,' he said. But what do I care for that formality, when there is no kindness about it?"

The deacon expected consolation and support.

"Earn it," Father Zakháriya remarked to him: "deserve it well, and then he will forgive you with affection."

"But how am I to earn it, Father Zakháriya?"

"Earn it by exemplary conduct."

"How am I to do it by exemplary conduct, when he does not notice me at all? Do you think it is easy for me, Father, when I see that he is grieving, when I see that now-a-days he is so frequently thoughtful. O, my God! I say to myself: why is he in such a stupor? Perhaps he is worrying about me. . . . For you see, no matter how angry he may be with me, that is all pretence on his part; he loves me. . . ." The deacon turned away, and banging his fist down in his palm, he cried:

"Well, you son of an altar-bread baker, you won't get off scot free in this affair! May I be Cain in very truth, and not a deacon, if I don't maim that teacher Varnávka publicly!"

From this threat alone the reader can see that the teacher here alluded to, Varnávka Prepótsky, was menaced with very decided danger from the quarter of deacon Akhílla, and this danger became all the more menacing and imminent, in proportion as Akhílla began to feel more frequently and oppressively an anguished longing for his lost paradise, for the good will of Father Savély which he had forfeited. And, behold, at last the hour struck, from which the punishment of Varnáva Prepótsky at the hands of Akhílla was to begin, and this event exactly coincided with the beginning of the great Stáry Górod drama, which constitutes the theme of our chronicle.

In order to enable our readers to comprehend this drama, we will ignore, for the time being, all the paths and roads by which Akhílla, like an American pathfinder, is tracking his enemy, the teacher Varnávka,¹ and will plunge into the depths of the inner world of the most dramatic personage in our tale—we will enter into the realm, unknown and invis-

¹ The diminutive termination in *ka* indicates a degree of scorn.
TRANSLATOR.

ble to all who gaze upon the person from near at hand or from afar. We will penetrate into the neat little house of Father Tuberózoff. Perchance, as we stand within that house we shall find means to cast a glance into the interior of its owner's soul, as one gazes into a glass beehive, where the bees are compounding their wonderful honey-comb, with its wax for the illumination of the face of God and honey for the delectation of man. But we will be cautious and delicate: we will don light sandals, in order that our footsteps may not startle the sad and thoughtful archpriest; we will put the fabled cap of invisibility, upon our head, in order that our curious face may not agitate the serious glance of the stately old man, and we will keep our ears open to everything which we shall hear from him.

CHAPTER IV

A SUMMER evening broods over Stáry Górod. The sun set long ago. The hilly bank of the river, where rise the pointed cupolas of the cathedral, is illuminated by the pale gleam of the moon, and the quiet stretch on the opposite shore is drowned in a warm mist. Solitary figures pass, from time to time, across the floating bridge which connects the two sections of the town. They walk hurriedly: night, in this tranquil town, gathers all to their nests and hearths at an early hour. The post-cart has rumbled past, with its bell, running over the loose planks of the bridge as one runs over the keys of a piano, and all has again sunk into silence. From the far-off forest wafts a beneficent freshness. On the island, which is formed by the branches of the Túritza, and upon which gleams green the melon patch of the bandy-legged eccentric, a certain Konstantín Pizonsky, a very aged man of the ecclesiastical caste who had failed to finish school, and is called by every one "uncle Kótin," shouts resound:

"Molvósha! where are you, Molvósha?"

It is the old man, calling the frolicsome youngster, his adopted son, and his shouts are as audible in the house of the archpriest as though they were being emitted in the very ear of the archpriest's wife, who is sitting at the window. Then from the same spot, that same melon-patch, was borne the sound of childish laughter, and the splashing of water becomes audible, and then the pattering of bare childish feet. across the loose planks of the bridge, the sonorous barking of a playful dog; and all this seemed so close at hand that the mother archpriestess, who continued to sit at her window all this while, sprang to her feet, and threw her arms out in front of her. It seemed to her as though the scampering,

laughing child were on the point of falling upon her lap. But, on glancing about her, the archpriestess perceived that this was an illusion, and retreating from the window into the depths of the room, she lighted a candle on the chest of drawers, and called to a little girl aged twelve, and asked her:

“Do you know where the father archpriest is, Fyóklinka?”

“He is playing checkers at the police commissioner’s, mátushka.”¹

“Ah, at the police commissioner’s. Well, it’s all right if he is with the police commissioner. Come, Fyóklinka, let’s make up his bed for him before he returns.”

Fyóklinka brought from the adjoining room into the sitting-room two pillows, a sheet and a quilted coverlet of yellow woollen material; and the mother archpriestess brought in a white piqué dressing-gown, and a large, poppy-red silk handkerchief. They made the bed up for the father archpriest on the large, rather hard divan of Karelian birch. The head was open; they threw the white dressing-gown over an arm-chair which stood at the foot of the bed, and laid the scarlet kerchief upon it. When this part of their task was accomplished, the mother archpriestess and Fyóklinka moved to the head of father Savély’s bed a heavy, oval table, also of Karelian birch, on a massive pedestal, and on this table placed a candle, a glass of water, a small dish of crushed sugar, and a little bell. All these preparations, and the care with which they were executed, bore witness to the great attention paid by the archpriestess to all the habits of her husband. Only when everything was arranged in proper fashion, according to custom, did she quiet down, extinguish the candle, and seat herself again, alone, at the window, to await the archpriest. Any one who looked at her would have perceived that she was awaiting him with anx-

¹ The national form of address to any woman; especially applied to the wife of a priest. It means, literally, “dear little mother.” Priests are similarly addressed as “bátiushka”—“dear little father.” TRANSLATOR.

iety; and there was a cause for this: Tuberózoff, who had long been far from cheerful, had been moping in a particular manner all day long, and this troubled his amiable spouse. Moreover, he was fatigued: he had gone that day to the fields of some dwellers in the suburbs, and had there celebrated a service of prayer, because of the prolonged drought. After dinner he had dozed for a while, and then had gone for a stroll, but, as it appeared, had dropped in to see the captain of the district police (*isprávník*), and had not yet returned. His little archpriestess waits for him another half hour, and still another hour, and still he does not come. Silence unbroken reigns. But lo! from the crest of the bank the decidedly agreeable singing of some person becomes audible. The mother archpriestess listens. It is deacon Akhilla singing; she knows his voice well. He is descending from the Batava hill, and warbling:

“Darkness of night
Had veiled the skies;
All folks for rest
Had closed their eyes.”

The deacon descended the slope, and as he crossed the bridge, he continued:

“A-knocking then came Cupid
At my door, so it would seem;
And thus, at its beginning,
Broke off my pleasant dream.”

The archpriestess listened with pleasure to Akhilla's singing, because she loved him—both because he loved her husband, and because she loved his singing. She fell a-dreaming, and did not hear the deacon step upon the bank, and come nearer and nearer, and, at last, right under her very window, he suddenly broke out with the declamation:

“‘Who's knocking there so boldly?’
Through the door I loudly cried.”

The dozing archpriestess gave a soft scream: "Ah!" and darted away from the window to the centre of the room.

The deacon, on hearing this scream, ceased singing, and came to a halt. "Haven't you gone to bed yet, Natálya Nikoláevna?" he addressed the archpriestess, and with these words, grasping the window-sill with both hands, and springing upon the surbase, he exclaimed:

"There's peace between us!"

"What?" inquired the archpriestess.

"Peace," repeated the deacon:—"peace."

Akhílla drew his hand through the air, and added:

"The father archpriest . . . the end . . ."

"What are you talking about, what end?" queried the archpriestess, suddenly, startled by this word.

"The end . . . the end of everything with me. . . . Henceforth, peace and good will. What's the date of today? The fourth of June: so do you write down: 'June 4th., peace and good will,' because it is peace to all men, and a full stop to Varnávka the schoolmaster."

"There's something wrong with you. . . . Your breath doesn't smell of liquor, but you are talking nonsense."

"Talking nonsense! Well, you'll pretty soon see whether I'm talking nonsense or not. Today is the fourth of June, the feast of Methódy of Pyesnóshsk, so do you write down that from this day forth it is all made up between us."

The deacon raised himself some more, on his elbows, and thrusting his body through the window as far as his waist, whispered:

"I suppose you don't know what schoolmaster Varnávka has done?"

"No, my friend, I have not heard, what that good-for-nothing has done."

"A frightful thing, ma'am! he has boiled a man in a pot."

"Deacon, what nonsense are you talking now?" exclaimed the archpriestess.

"Yes he did ma'am, he boiled him."

"Positively, you are lying. You cannot get a man into a pot."

"He boiled him in the lye-pot," went on the deacon, paying no attention to her: "and although the commissioner of police and the doctor permitted him this abominable deed, nevertheless, because of it he is now given into my hands."

"Deacon, you are inventing; you are making up all that."

"No, ma'am, excuse me, I'm not inventing for a single moment," said the deacon rapidly, and shaking his head, he began to fire off one word after another more rapidly than before. "Now, please to listen attentively, to the matter and its course: Varnávka actually has boiled a man with the sanction of the authorities, that is to say, of the commissioner of police and the doctor, because it was a man who was found drowned; but that boiled man is now tormenting him frightfully, and also his mother, the Madam Altar-bread baker, and I found out all about it, and told it to the father archpriest at the police commissioner's, and the father archpriest gave it to him for that . . . said in French 'probirez-moi that,' ma'am, and the police commissioner said: 'I'll take some soldiers and put an end to this,' says he, 'for I'm a soldier myself,' and no later than tomorrow, very reverend madam, Natálya Nikoláevna, you will see how deacon Akhílla begins to punish schoolmaster Varnávka, who blasphemes, agitates live people, and tortures the dead. Yes, ma'am, today is the fourth of June, the memory of holy Methódy of Pyesnóshsk, and do you write that down. . . ."

But with these words the torrent of Akhílla's eloquence broke off short, for at that point it struck him that he heard the cough of the father archpriest from the distant hill.

"There, priest Savély is coming!" exclaimed Akhílla as he heard that voice, and springing from the foundation of the house to the ground, he went his way.

The archpriestess remained at her window, not only in the dark as to what the deacon was threatening to do to schoolmaster Prepótensky, but even in an absolute chaos as

what he had been talking about. She had no time to think over Akhílla's incoherent remarks, for she heard the steps of the porch creak, and Father Savély entered the vestibule, with his tall purple velvet cap (*kamilávka*) on his head, and in his hand that same walking-stick upon which was inscribed: "The Rod of Aaron blossomed."

The archpriestess rose, lighted two candles at once, and from beneath them darted a keen glance at her husband as he entered. The archpriest quietly kissed his wife on the brow, quietly removed his cassock, put on his dressing-gown, tied the scarlet silk handkerchief round his neck, and seated himself at the little window.

The archpriestess had completely forgotten everything which the deacon had said to her a few minutes before, and therefore did not question her husband about anything. She invited him into the adjoining room, a small, longish chamber, which served as her bedroom, where Father Savély's evening refreshments were now prepared for him. Father Savély seated himself at the small table, ate two soft-boiled eggs which had been cooked for him, and after having recited his prayers, began to take leave of his wife for the night. The archpriestess herself never supped. As a rule, she merely sat opposite her husband while he ate, and rendered him small services, now handing him something, again receiving and removing a dish. Then they both rose, prayed in front of the holy picture, and immediately afterwards began to make the sign of the cross over each other. This mutual blessing of each other for approaching slumber they always executed simultaneously, and with such cleverness and rapidity, that one could not refrain from wondering why their hands, swiftly flashing past each other, did not come into collision or get entangled.

Having received this mutual blessing, the husband and wife exchanged a kiss, the father archpriest kissing his diminutive wife on the brow, and she kissing him on the heart: then they parted: the archpriest went to his parlour, and soon got into bed. In precisely this manner did he enter

his chamber on this particular day, but instead of going to bed, he paced the room for a long time, and at last shut and softly hooked the door into his wife's bed-chamber.

"Father Savély, why aren't you in a cheerful mood?" inquired the archpriestess through the thin wall, for she was thoroughly initiated into the most minute features of her husband's character.

"Yes, my dear, I am tranquil," replied the archpriest.

"Shall not I give you a fresh handkerchief for the night, Father Savély?" she inquired, springing out of bed, and applying her nose to the leaf of the door.

"A handkerchief? Why, you gave me a handkerchief on Saturday."

"Well, and what if I did give you one on Saturday? . . . Come now, do open the door, Father Savély! What sort of a fashion is this you have taken to of locking yourself up from me?"

The archpriest silently threw back the hook, and Natályá Nikoláevna brought in a clean silk handkerchief, and taking advantage of the opportunity, she and her husband began to take leave of each other all over again, in the same remarkable fashion (for the unaccustomed beholder), and then they parted once more. The door now remained open: it became plain why the archpriest was bent upon having it shut. The father archpriest did not feel sleepy, and he felt that he was not going to be able to get to sleep: an hour passed, and he was still pacing up and down the room in his white piqué dressing-gown and with the poppy-red silk kerchief round his neck. Some sort of conflict seemed to be in progress within the old man. In spite of all the external dignity of his manners and movements, he walked with uneven steps, now hastening them somewhat, as though he were desirous of rushing off somewhere, again retarding them, and, at last, coming to a full stop and falling into thought. This pacing to and fro continued for a good hour longer before Father Savély approached the small, red cupboard fastened on top of the chest of drawers, with an extension board. From this

cupboard he took Evgénieff's *Calendar*, bound in thick, blue jeans, with a back of yellow Russia-leather, laid this book on the oval table which stood beside his bed, lighted in front of him two economical candles, and paused: he thought he heard his wife tossing about, sleepless. And that was actually the case.

"You are going to read, surely?" inquired Natálya Nikoláevna at that moment, from the other side of the wall, in her quiet, anxious little voice.

"Yes, my dear Natálya, I'm going to read a little," replied Father Tuberózoff: "but do me a favour, and go to sleep, please."

"I will, my dear, I will," answered the archpriestess.

"Yes, I beg of you, go to sleep,"—and with these words, the father archpriest, having saddled his haughty, roman nose with a huge pair of silver spectacles, began slowly turning over the pages of his blue book. He did not read, but merely turned over the pages of this book, not pausing, over what was printed in it, but merely scrutinizing the extra pages written by his own hand. The entries had all been made at different times, and resurrected before the old archpriest a whole world of memories, to which he was fond of reverting, from time to time.

As we find ourselves between Father Savély and his past, we will listen quietly and respectfully to the soft murmur of his aged lips, sounding through the dull silence of the midnight hour.

CHAPTER V

TUBEROZÓFF looked through his Calendar, from the first inserted page, on which was written: "At my ordination, to the priesthood, on February 4, 1831, by Bishop Gavriil, I received from him this book as a gift for my satisfactory completion of my studies in the Academy, and for good conduct." After the first entry, made on the very day of Tuberózoff's priesthood, followed a second: "I preached for the first time in the Cathedral after the pontifical service. As the theme of my sermon I chose the text about the sons of the man who had a vineyard. One said: 'I will not go' and went, and the other replied, 'I go' and went not. I made the application to good deeds and good intentions, permitting myself a few allusions to those in the service, to those who have taken an oath, and are heedless of their oath, thereby giving delicate hints as to subordination and the authorities. I spoke fluently and less ostentatiously than naturally. The Bishop approved of this sample of my pen. Nevertheless, afterwards, His Grace summoned me to him, and while approving of my remarks as a whole, he pointed out, in particular, that in sermons one must shun direct relations to life, especially where officials are concerned, for the higher they are in station, the more sacred they are. But he did not reprimand me for what I had already said, and even seemed to think well of it."

1832 December 18th. I was summoned by the Archbishop, and received the appointment to Stáry Górod, where the Schism is particularly strong. I am commanded to oppose the Schismatics by every means in my power.

1833, on the eighth day of February I set out with my wife from the village of Blagoúkhoff, to Stáry Górod, and arrived

here on the twelfth, about time for Matins. On the road we came near being devoured by a pack of wolves. In the church I found disorder. The Schism is powerful. On looking about me, I found opposition to the Schism, in accordance with the orders of the Consistory, is not an important matter, and I wrote the Consistory to that effect, and received a reprimand."

The archpriest skipped several entries, and paused again upon the following: "Having received a reproof for my lack of activity in not sending in abundant denunciations, I defended myself by saying that the Schismatics are not doing anything more than what has long been known to every one, so there was nothing to write about; and thereto I added, in that same report, that the principal point was, that the church clergy is in the most extreme poverty, and for that reason, owing to mortal frailty, were not opposed to bribes, and even upheld the Schism a little themselves, just like the other guardians of Orthodoxy, by accepting gifts from the Schismatics. I wound up by saying, that the only way to begin reforming the griefs of the church, was by removing the clergy themselves from such oppressive dependence. As an instance of this, I pointed out the Schism's comparison of the Synod with the Patriarchate, hoping thereby to justify my activity, and get rid of my turn to make a denunciation, but for this attempt I received a second reprimand and rebuke, and was summoned to make a personal explanation, on which occasion I was called 'a disrespectful Ham, who had uncovered the nakedness of his father.' This, I am bound to suppose, I was vouchsafed to receive because I acknowledged that the poor, half-starving clergy, were often obliged, willy-nilly, to connive at the Schism, and especially because I mentioned the Synod. . . . Pray forgive me, whoever is offended! By way of making you forget these great faults of mine, I will remind you of the words of a secular but luminous writer, Mr. Tatishstcheff: 'But a starving man, even though he be a Patriarch, will accept a bit of bread, especially when it is offered.' There's a slap for the Patriarch!"

Later, a few entries further on, was jotted down this: Have been to the Government town on business, and presenting myself to the Bishop, I made a personal report to him about the poverty of the church servitors. His Grace greatly regretted the fact: but he remarked to me that Our Lord Himself had not where to lay His head, and yet He did not cease to teach on that account. He advised me to recommend the clergy to read the book, "On the Imitation of Christ." I made no reply to His Grace about this, and it would have been quite useless to reply, for our clergy, in their poverty, have no means of procuring that book.

While supping with the Father Sacristan of the cathedral, I artfully led the conversation round again to that same subject with the Father District Superintendent; but they turned my remarks into jest. The secretary said, with a grin, that "it was easier for the poor man to enter the kingdom of God."—which we already knew without the aid of his Well-born Honour; and thereupon, the Father Sacristan narrated an anecdote, not devoid of interest, concerning a student in the Theological Academy, who afterwards became a famous Prelate, and preacher. This student is supposed to have replied—while still a layman—to the Bishop's question whether he possessed any property:

"I do, your Grace."

"And is it movable or immovable?" inquired the latter, to which the student answered:

"Both movable and immovable."

"What is your movable property?" the Bishop proceeded to ask, perceiving the noticeable wretchedness of his costume.

"My movable property consists of a house in the country," replied the man interrogated.

"What—a house movable property? Reflect how stupid your answer is."

But the other, not in the least abashed by this, declared that his answer was correct, for his house was of such a

character, that as soon as the wind blew upon it, it began to move.

This reply appeared so peculiar to the Bishop, that he did not care to reckon it for stupidity against the student, but, on the contrary, becoming interested in him, he went on to ask:

“And what do you regard as your immovable property?”

“My immovable property,” replied the student, “is my mother, the chanter’s widow, and our brown cow, neither of whom could move their legs when I left home, one from old age, and the other from lack of food.”

We all laughed not a little at this, although I found more that was sorrowful and tragic about it than comic mirth, capable of consoling. I begin to notice in every one a considerable amount of sportiveness and frivolity, in which I foresee nothing good.

I pass my life in sleeping and eating. I cannot offer an opposition to the Schism in any way, for I am bound up with them all, and with my half-starved staff, and the very well-fed commissioner of the district police. I am angry at being sent apparently, to be made a laughing-stock of, with a missionary aim: am I to preach—when there is no one to preach to; am I to teach—when no one listens? The captain of police preaches far better than I do, because he has a missionary implement with several ends¹ yet they demand denunciations from me. Oh, my Master! To what end are these denunciations? What am I to wrap up in them? But in my opinion, my very rank itself does not permit of my writing them. I would rather make them a gift of unsullied paper. . . .

I presented a report for permission to hold at Easter a discussion with the Schismatics, and was refused. Moreover, in addition to the formal document, the secretary laughingly wrote in private, that if I were bored to death, I might run up to see them. No indeed, I thank you most, most humbly,

¹ Meaning, probably, the knout. TRANSLATOR.

and for your health's sake, don't get angry. Without that, my garment betrays that I am not a wedding-guest, and my wife is going about in nothing but her under petticoat. We ought, somehow or other, to fit ourselves out with new uniforms, because the people kiss our hands, but so far, there is absolutely nothing wherewith we may do so; but the most repulsive thing about it is, the contemptuous, insolent and shameless tone in which the Consistory says: "Don't you want to come up to the Consistory, priest, and let yourself be milked?" No, my friends, I won't, I won't; find yourselves a fatter nurse.

October 13, 1835. I have read a book about detecting the Schism. It has everything in it, but one thing is not there,—that the Schismatics live up to their errors, while we neglect our right path; and that, it strikes me, is the most important.

This morning, March 18, 1836, my wife, Natálya Nikoláevna hinted to me that she felt herself with child. May the Lord grant us that joy! It is expected in the beginning of November.

May 9th, on the feast of St. Nicholas the demolition of the Old Believers's chapel in Dyeusk took place. It was a dreadful spectacle, unseemly and downright revolting; and in addition, as though to make it even worse, the iron cross broke away from the lantern of the cupola, and hung by its chains, and being forced by the hooks of the exasperated demolishers to fall, it came down suddenly, and smashed the skull of a soldier of the fire department, a Jew, who died on the spot. Akh, how painful it was to me to see all that: O Lord! really, if only they had not sent Jews to tear down the crosses! In the evening, the people gathered about the demolished oratory,—both their clergy and ours, and all wept much and bitterly together, and, at last, even began to seek embrace and union.

May 10th. The authorities have been making great mistakes. Before midnight, a rumour got abroad that the people had carried out a shrine—lamp to a stone, and had begun to

pray over the demolished chapel. We all assembled, and saw that a service of prayer really was in progress, and the lamp was burning in the hands of the elder, and had not gone out. A policeman gave orders that the fire-hose should be quietly brought, and the water played on the people. This was very ill-advised, and, I will say it, very stupid even, for the people lighted candles and went about among the houses singing: "the tormentor Pharaoh," and shouting: "The Lord will fight for the tortured faith, and the wind shall not extinguish the tapers"; others nodded their heads towards me, and yelled: "Give us the holy picture of our Most Pure Virgin of the Intercession, and bow down before your own with uncovered hair in foreign garments." I merely pointed out to the policeman how imprudent had been his arrangements for demolishing the building, tearing down the crosses and removing the holy images, but what did he care? All he cares for is to win the favour of the German.

May 12th. Foppishness has conquered me: I have got, on credit, from the housekeeper of the Marshal of Nobility's wife, two of the Marshale's silk gowns, and have sent them to town to be dyed dark, purplish-red, like what the Proto-deacon in the Government capital wears, and I shall have a silk cassock made for myself. I cannot get along without that bit of decency, for I am getting the run of all the nobles' houses, and I have no intention of humbling myself.

May 17th. My wife Natálya Nikoláevna has informed me that she was mistaken as to her condition.

June 20th. On complaint of the prefect that I did not go with the cross at Easter to the houses of the Schismatics, I was again summoned to the Government town. I set forth this matter in detail to the Bishop, explaining that I omitted to go to the Old Believers not through negligence of duty, for it was even a loss to my pocket; but that I had done it in order that the Schismatics might feel that they were being deprived of the honour of my visit, with my clergy. The Bishop reflected, and then accepted my explanation; but not in vain saith the proverb, that the Tzar hath mercy but his huntsman

is merciless. Seeing that this matter of my omission concerned the civil power also, on a certain side, in order to put an end to this empty pretension and be done with it, the Bishop sent me to explain this important affair to the Governor. But what an explanation it was!—Woe is me, a sinner, what did I not undergo there! Alas, also for you, my intimates, my brethren and my sincere friends, for the shame and humiliation which I underwent at the hands of that bob-tailed and impious man! The Governor, being a German, and preserving the ambition of his Luther, did not admit the Russian priest to his presence, and ordered me to converse with his manager; and this manager, a Pole, did not condescend to look upon the matter from the Bishop's point of view, but fell upon me with shouts and roars, saying that I connived at the Schism and was resisting the will of my Emperor. Woe unto you, you leprous Pole,—to think that you, with your hard-boiled conscience should upbraid me with resisting the will of my Tzar! However, I bore it, and departed in silence, calling to mind the Little Russian saying: "Skip, O enemy, as the master commands!" And it all turned out—all I have here described—as though it had happened to celebrate the first use of my silk cassock, which I may remark, by the way, is very nicely made, and hardly betrays the fact that it is made of different materials, except in the sunlight.

March 23rd. Today, Holy Saturday, the chanters and deacon came to me. Prókhor demands that, without fail, we shall make the rounds of the Schismatics' houses at Easter with the cross, for the omission of that custom is a financial loss to them. I gave them forty rubles of my own money, but did not go on such a disgraceful errand, for the sake of collecting money as an alms at the peasants' gates. And now I see my cassock in the light of a folly: I might have got along without it, and then I would have had means to bestow more abundantly on the staff. But I said to myself: "The commissary cannot go without breeches."

April 24, 1837. I have been humiliated to the point of tears and sobs. There has been another denunciation lodged

against me, and again I have had to stand before that manager of the Governor's because I did not go to the houses of the Schismatics with the cross. The denunciation emanated from my own clergy. How am I to endure this baseness and ingratitude? He's a thinker, that administrator! just let him count up in his own mind of what the life of a Russian priest is composed. All the way home I lamented that I had not gone to the Academy. Thence I would have entered the monastic life, like the rest: then I would have ridden in a carriage, I myself would have issued commands, and they would not have harassed me. I comforted myself viciously with this vanity, obstinately imagining myself a Bishop, but when I reached home, and was tenderly caressed by my wife, I returned thanks to God who has arranged things for me as they are.

April 25. I have been humiliated in the province; but that is nothing in comparison with the way I was put to shame at home this day, like a school-boy.

Yesterday I merely recorded my grievances and dissatisfaction; but this morning, rising early, I seated myself at the window, and as I reflected upon my affairs and my past, and the future, I gazed at the melon-patch of the semi-beggar Pízonky, which lay spread out before me. Last year a certain halfwitted girl, Nástyá, who had been seduced by a passing soldier, gave birth on his melon-beds to a boy baby, and then threw herself into the river and was drowned. Pízonky, in his lonely old age, took charge of the child, and every one forgot all about the matter; and I was at the head of those who forgot. But this morning, as I was gazing down loftily upon this land of Pízonky's, and thinking about my affairs, I suddenly began to notice that that freshly-dug earth, so black that it appeared bluish, was luxuriating in a particularly pleasing way beneath the morning sun, and that lean little black birds in gleaming plumage, were hopping along the furrows, and strengthening their hungry bodies with fresh worms. Old Pízonky himself, with his bald head all illuminated by the sun, was standing on the ladder at the nursery-garden fastened upon

piles, and holding in one hand a cup filled with seeds, with the other hand was planting them in, by pinches, in the form of a cross, and gazing heavenwards, and as he dropped each grain, he cried out, uttering one word for each: "O God, establish, and multiply, and give increase for the lot of every man who is hungry or lonely, for him who desires and for him who asks and for the contrary-minded, and for him who blesses, and for him who is ungrateful"; and no sooner had he finished this, than, suddenly, all the shining black birds who were roaming about his ploughed field, set up a cry, the hens began to cackle and a loud-voiced cock began to crow, noisily flapping his wings the while, and the little boy whom this eccentric man had adopted, the son of foolish Nástyá, got up from his mat; he laughed with childish glee, clapping his little hands, and smiled as he crept along the soft earth. All this was like a vision to me. Old Pízonsky was happy, and began to sing: 'Alleluia! Alleluia, O my God!' I too began to sing, in my rapture, and fell to weeping with emotion. In those healing tears I alleviated my vexations, and realized how stupid was my grief, and for a long time thereafter I was lost in amazement at the wonderful way in which Nature heals the ills of the human soul! Multiply and increase, O God, the good on earth in every lot: for him who desires, and for him who asks, and for the *contrary-minded*, and for the *ungrateful*. . . . I never met with a prayer of that sort in a printed book. O my God! O my God! That old man was planting for the benefit of the thief, and praying for him! Perhaps that could not be justified by secular criticism, but it is frightfully touching to the heart. O, my tenderhearted Russia, how very beautiful thou art!

August 6th, the day of the Lord's Transfiguration. How charming my *popadyá*, Natálya Nikolaévna is! again I say: Where, except in holy Russia, can such women exist? I told her how deeply touched I was by the tenderness of that dreadfully poor Pízonsky towards children, and she immediately understood, or divined my thought and my

longing: she embraced me, and with the blushing modesty which so becomes her, said: "Wait, Father Savély, perhaps the Lord will give to us." (Of course she meant: will give us a child.) But I, as is my wont, thinking that such hopes on her part are always vain and deceptive, did not ask her for any particulars; and so it turned out—there was no necessity for being disturbed. But this mistaken anxiety produced the most splendidly melting impression. Today I said a few words about my conviction as to the necessity of our being transfigured every day, that in all struggles we may have strength to forge ourselves into shape like strong and malleable metal, and not be flattened out like base clay, drying and preserving the imprint of the last foot which was trodden upon it. As I said this, I was carried away into a sort of improvisation and called the attention of the congregation to Pízonky, who was standing near the door. Although I did not mention him by name, still I spoke of him as one who stood among us, who, having come to us naked and jeered at by all the stupid people for his poverty, not only had not perished himself, but had performed the greatest of human deeds, having worked out his own salvation, and reared little birds devoid of feathers. I said how sweet it was—to warm the defenceless bodies of little children, and implant in their souls the seeds of good. When I had uttered this, I felt that my own eyelashes were wet, and saw that many of my hearers were wiping away their tears and seeking some one with their eyes, and my soul understood that they were looking for Kótin the pauper. Kótin the nourisher of orphans. And perceiving that he had disappeared—for understanding my allusion he had humbly gone out—I felt a sort of keen but holy pain and sense of stifling, because I had disturbed him with my praise, and I said: "No, brethren, he is not among us! For he stood in no need of this feeble word of mine, for the word love was long since traced in his humble heart by the fiery finger of God.—I beg of you," I said, making a reverence, 'that all you respected and distinguished citi-

zens here assembled, will forgive me that in my address I have not held up to you as an example of strength some highly-renowned warrior, but one of these little ones, and if that in any way disturbs you, set it down to my insignificant person, for your sinful priest Savély as he gazed upon this little one, has felt, more than once, that he himself, in comparison with him, is not the priest of the most high God, but that within these vestments which cover my unworthiness stands a ruined sepulchre. Amen."

I do not know whether I ended wisely and eloquently with these simple words, uttered by me entirely *ex promptu*, but I can say, that the worshippers understood something of it all, and more than one tear fell upon my hand when I gave it to them to kiss at the benediction. But this is not all: The most important thing for me came later on.

As though by way of rewarding me, in a measure, for my sincere words about the joy of caring not only for one's own children, but also for strange ones, the Omnipresent God who fulfilleth all things has taken my unworthiness also under the protection of His right hand. Today He hath revealed to me the genuine value of the treasure which, through His boundless bounties, I possess, and commanded me to become transfigured into a man satisfied in the highest degree with his fate. No sooner did I reach home, with five of the apples blessed after the Liturgy ¹ than I found awaiting me on my threshold a meeting with a certain rather old acquaintance: my wife herself, Natálya Nikoláevna, having quietly crept out of church during the benediction, had prepared tea for me, as usual, with a light luncheon, and was standing on the threshold barring the way, but not with empty hands, for she held a bouquet of lilies from the river and gilly-flowers from the garden. "Well, you cannot deny that you are a crafty woman after this, Natálya Nikoláevna!" I said though never before had I accused her of

¹ Fruit, in general, is blessed on the Feast of the Transfiguration, whatever is convenient being taken to the church for the ceremony.
TRANSLATOR.

craftiness. But she is so clever that she did not take the slightest offence at it; she understood that it was said in jest, and embracing me, she merely fell to weeping, quietly but bitterly. Why these tears?—that is her secret, but the secret is no secret to me, kind wife, who is not able to comfort her husband, and is deprived of the power to give him the consolation of Israel, a little Benjamin. Yes, only with river-lilies and garden-gilly-flowers did her heart, open to love and good will, greet me on that day! In quiet grief, we two childless people sat down to drink tea—but it was not tea, but our tears which dissolved themselves into a beverage, and without noticing it ourselves, we both began to weep, and hand in hand we fell down upon our knees before the holy picture of the Saviour, and prayed long and fervently to Him, for the consolation of Israel. Natálya afterwards declared that she seemed to hear a promise, through an angel, and although I understood that that was the fruit of her kind imagination, yet both of us grew as merry as children. I perceive, however, that Natálya Nikoláevna decidedly excels me, a rough man, in the matter of logic and in the dignity of lofty feelings.

“Tell me, Father Savély,” she attacked me, with good-natured cajolery; “tell me, my dear: did you ever sin against the law of chastity before you met me?”

Such a question, I frankly confess, perturbed me extremely, for I suddenly began to understand why my naughty little wife was interrogating me in a manner so unlike her.

But she, with all her superb modesty, and with all that womanly coquetry, which she inherited from nature, in spite of her being a priest's wife, suddenly, and in a truly artful way, began to entice me with memories of my vanished youth, reminding me that the thing at which she had hinted might easily have happened, since all the young girls, not only of the priestly class but even of the fashionable set, had sighed for me! Amusing as this was, however, I tried to dispel all her doubts as to my youth, which was not difficult, for without lying, I have a right to do so. But

the more firmly I soothed her, the more deeply melancholy did she grow, and I could not comprehend why my justification did not cheer her in the least, but, on the contrary, seemed to render her sadder and sadder, until, at last, she said:

"Yes, Father Savély, recall a moment when you were, perhaps, frivolous—isn't there an orphan somewhere?"

Then I understood what she was trying to say, and her object in all this, and what she was ashamed to say; she was trying to discover my illegitimate child, which does not exist! What submission! Like a bull stung by a gad-fly, I tore myself from my seat, rushed to the window, and rivetted my eyes on the distant heavens, so that they alone might see me, who had been so outdone by my wife in kindness and solicitude. But she too, my lily and gilly-flower consort, my white rose, spotless, fragrant and lovely,—she also, rose and followed me; stepping lightly, she crept up behind me, and laying her tiny paws on my shoulders, she said:

"Try to remember, my dearest; perhaps, somewhere, there is a little darling, and if there is, let us go and get him."

Not only does she want to hunt him up, but she already loves and pities him, like a young dove unprotected by feathers! That was more than I could bear, and biting my beard with my teeth, I fell on my knees in front of her, and bowing to the ground before her, I began to sob with a sobbing which cannot be described by any words which exist on earth. Yea, and of a truth, show me any times or nations outside of our holy Russia, where such women are born, where such virtue has its being! Who has taught her all that? Who has nurtured her thus, except Thou, O All-gracious God, who hast given her to the most unworthy of Thy servants, that he might feel more intimately Thy grandeur and clemency."

At this point, almost an entire page of Father Savély's diary was covered with ink, and beneath this ink-blot the following lines were scribbled:

"I will not erase this blot, neither will I correct a certain incoherence and tautology which I notice in the last lines: let it all remain thus, for everything wherewith this moment of my life aboundeth, is precious to me in its present form, and should be preserved in that form. My wife has not ceased her pranks all day, although it is already twelve o'clock at night, and although, as a rule, she is always asleep at this hour, and although I like to have her always asleep at midnight, for that is healthy for her, and I like to refresh myself a little in the silence of the night by some timely, suitable reading, and sometimes I write up my diary, and frequently, after I have written a little, I go to look at her as she sleeps, and kiss her in her slumber, and if I am pained at anything, in that consoling kiss I drink fresh courage and strength, and then I go tranquilly to sleep. But today I have proceeded somewhat differently up to this time. On this today, whereon I have endured all feelings in unceasing variety, I became so engrossed in writing down what is inscribed above, that I felt my naughty little wife in my soul, and consequently my soul kissed her, and it never once occurred to me to go to her and kiss her. But she, that subtle sly-boots, perceiving this my neglect, repaired it with an incredible originality: an hour ago, she came and laid on my table a clean handkerchief and having kissed me, she went off to bed, like a sensible woman. But what incomprehensible feminine craftiness she appears to possess, notwithstanding! Suddenly, as I was writing very seriously, I saw my handkerchief begin to move, and then fall abruptly to the floor. I bent down, laid it on the table, again, and again began to write; but again the handkerchief fell to the floor. I laid it on my knees, and it fell off. Then I grasped that unruly thing, and anchored it, by placing an edge of it under the inkstand; but nevertheless, it ran away from there, and even dragged the inkstand with it, and overturned it, and so decorated my calendar with a good-sized blot. What does that flight of the linen mean? It means that my wife turns

out to be the queen of the coquettes, and a rare one, at that, for she is not coquetting with amiable me, but with her husband. I had reproached her with that already this evening, when she seated herself, with a smile, in front of me at the little window, and lamented that she did not know how to sing romances; but what a prank she has now devised and executed! For that she used the handkerchief she brought me, secretly fastening to it a very long thread, which she stretched under the door to her bed, and lying there at ease it pleased her mischievously to pull the handkerchief out from under my hand. And I, like the thick-witted man that I am, only discovered the trick because when the handkerchief fell for the last time, her gentle, merry laugh rang out, and then her little bare feet danced up and down behind the door. Having played her trick, she dived plump into bed. I went in and kissed her without measure, but went back to put on record for myself, all my wife's charming ways while the impression of them is still fresh in my memory."

August 7th. All last night I did not sleep, because of excess of happiness, and I am telling no lie, if I say that Natásha had not a little to do with my wakefulness. As lovers keep watch for the sun on St. Peter's day, thus did she and I, after five years of married life watch for the sunrise today, as we sat at the window. The darling confessed that she very often failed to sleep, like this, when I was writing and only pretended to be asleep; and she confessed a lot of other things. She confessed that yesterday, in church, as she listened to my address, which pleased her greatly for some reason, she made a vow to go on foot to Kieff as soon as she should feel herself with child. I did not approve of this, because such a journey is far beyond the strength of a pregnant woman; but I gave her leave to fulfil her vow, because, in the case of such joy, of course I would go with her, and whenever she grew weary, I would carry her. I made an experiment in this line: I carried her about in my arms for a long time in

the garden, dreaming that she was already with child and that I was guarding her, lest any mishap should occur to her through walking. I became so carried away with this welcome thought, that seeing Natáša seat herself, mischievously, in the swing which the cook's little girl has fastened under the apple-tree, I even took down the swing, so that this might not happen again, and threw it up into the apple-tree, which made Natáša laugh a very great deal. But, although my life does not abound in things which demand careful secrecy, still it is well that the owner of our little house surrounded his tiny garden with a good fence, and that the Lord has caused this fence to be overgrown with dense raspberry bushes, otherwise, I fear some one might say that it would not be a sin to call priest Savély a buffoon, at times.

August 9th. I must record a most diverting incident, concerning which my wife today had not only a conversation but even a quarrel with the deacon's son, the rhetorician. This really is an extraordinary case, and a comedy. They disputed on the topic: "*Who is the wisest of all men?*" The rhetorician said that Solomon was the wisest man of all, but my wife declared that I was, and I must admit, that on this occasion the magnificent King of Zion had a far less steadfast advocate than I had. Oh, how I laughed! And just to think what things happen in the world!

I heard it all from the bedroom, as I was taking my nap after dinner, and waking up, I could not bring myself to interrupt their dispute, but they dealt each other terrible blows: the rhetorician, upholding the wisdom of Solomon, reinforced his opinion by the words of Scripture, that "Solomon was wiser than all men who dwelt upon the earth," but my good woman smote him in a peculiar manner: "That's nothing, nothing," said she, "don't keep poking your *was*, and your *said*, at me; that *was* of yours," said she, "signifies nothing, because it was written before priest Savély was born." Father Zakhárya Benefáktoff, who overheard their discussion, put in his word, and capped the climax, by confirming

my wife's words with "that's true"—that is to say, "true" in the sense that I was not born at the time. So it turned out that all three of these critics were in the right. The only person who was not in the right was myself, to whom all committed their opinions for anti-criticism: in the first place, I grieved my Natásha, by rejecting her opinion that I am wiser than any one else, and to her question, who was wiser than I? I answered that *she* was. To this I received the most desperate resistance,—the sort which the truth alone can overcome: "Wise men," I said, "argue about everything, but I cannot judge of anything, and I never argue." "Why is this?" Thereupon I tapped her gently on her little nose, and answered: "This is so that you will not make haste to interfere with the argument that instead of a stubborn nose, you have had this meek little button planted in this spot." Nevertheless, she understood what I meant to express by that jest, which alluded to her gentleness, and she tried to discredit herself by calling to mind, to that end, how she had once had a hand to hand encounter with the wife of the postmaster, and had taken away from her a serving-maid whom she was chastizing severely.

August 10th, morning. What an idea occurred to me in bed today! I mean to publish a recipe for all unhappy couples, of all classes, especially those belonging to the caste of the clergy, since domestic happiness is even more indispensable to us.

It is said, figuratively speaking, that it is better for a woman to meet a man with water when he advances with fire—that is to say, if he is fiery, she should be gentle; but, in my opinion, all this is not so clear, and, moreover, it admits of too many interpretations: but I, surveying myself and Natálya Nikoláevna, have decided to deduce the conclusion, that the surest method of getting on well together, is—that each should think the other wiser, and then each will be wiser than the other. "Other, other, other!" I certainly am expressing myself superbly! However, a genuine thinker should speak thus obscurely.

August 15. The Falling-Asleep of the All-Holy Birth-giver of God.¹ But while I was going into raptures over my wife, I did not notice that my remarks which so affected Natásha on Transfiguration day, affected other people in exactly the opposite way, and that I was sowing for myself an entirely unexpected dissatisfaction against myself in certain persons in the town. My worshippers—not all, of course, but a number, to tell the truth—with the wife of Timónoff, the postmaster, at their head, took offence and thought I humiliated them by my allusion to Pízonsky. But this is all the nonsense of empty and quarrelsome minds. Of course, these wounds to the vanity of their well-born Honours will heal up as promptly as scratches on a dog's skin.

September 3rd. I have made a considerable mistake: no, there is no end to this imprudence. I have received from the Consistory an inquiry as to whether I 'really did deliver an impromptu sermon, and allude to a living person?' O, how what is alive is everywhere feared among us! Naturally, I replied that I had said thus and so. I do not think they will hang me for that, and they will not take my head off, nevertheless, I am perturbed against my will, and my tranquillity has vanished.

October 20th. Most assuredly it is true that they don't take off heads, but they can close mouths, and they have not omitted to do so. On September 15th, I was summoned to explain myself. This haste, taken by itself, did not forebode much good, for people are never in a hurry with us about good things, especially the authorities; but I set out bravely. My bravery was cooled down, in the first place, by being kept for thirty-six days on fish-soup minus the fish, while awaiting the explanation, and next by being ordered to send whatever I wished to say to Censor Troádiy, in the first instance. But that I will never do, and I will

¹ The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, as the Eastern Church expresses it. TRANSLATOR.

be as dumb as a fish to them. Forgive my pride, O Almighty One, but I cannot perform the act of preaching with indifferent coolness. There are times when I feel something descending upon me, when my favourite gift seeks action; I am then possessed by a certain sacred uneasiness, if I may venture so to express myself: my soul quivers and burns, and the words fall from my lips like burning coals. No, at such times I have my own law of censure in my soul! . . . But they demand that, instead of a living speech, sent straight from soul to soul, I shall deliver a rhetorical exercise, and thereby afford Father Troádiy the satisfaction of feeling that the days of Moghíla, Dmítry of Rostóff ¹ and other brilliant lights, has passed, and other days have come, when it is not the wiser who exhorts the weaker to wisdom, but the other way about, that thereby the mind and soul of man may be insulted. That road I will not tread.

No, I rebel against this, and thou shalt rather shut thyself altogether, my unflattering mouth, and you, my sincere words, shall fall silent, but a preacher under compulsion I will not be.

November 23rd. At any rate, I cannot say that my life has been offended by complete monotony. On the contrary, everything is mixed in together, so that the interest does not flag even for a single minute: now good people calumniate, then the authorities worry me, then they apprentice me to mournful-head Troádiy, then I am captivated by the caresses of my wife, then I meditate myself into self-conceit, and meanwhile the days go on and on, and death approaches nearer and nearer. And there is more to come! I have not yet got through with all the consequences of my ill-starred sermon at the Feast of the Transfiguration. Eighteen versts from town, on the bank of the same river which runs through our village, in the extensive village of Plodomásovo, dwells the owner of that village, the noblewoman Márfa Andréevna

¹Famous Bishops and preachers in the XVII century. TRANSLATOR.

Plodomásóff. She dates from so far back that she has given no signs of life for a long time past, and all that is known is the ancient memory that she is a woman of no little spirit. She was acquainted with the great Empress Katharine, and the Emperor Alexander I, when he talked with her, found her conversation far from burdensome to him; but she is chiefly known among the people from the fact that in her young years she contended single-handed with Pugatchóff,¹ and contrived to defend herself against that fierce beast. And if other things concerning her are recalled, they are a repetition of various original anecdotes about her encounters with divers governors, and officials who have called upon her, and also, in the year 1812 with the French prisoners; but all this belongs to the epoch of the last century. Nowadays people have forgotten her, and if she chances to be mentioned, people think that she herself has already forgotten every one. For the last twenty years no outsiders can boast of having seen Madam Plodomásóff.

The day before yesterday at twelve o'clock, noon, I was unspeakably surprised to behold driving towards me the great Plodomásóff carriage, drawn by three huge chestnut horses, and in the carriage a particularly small man in a fleecy cap of hat material with a long visor, and a light-brown cloak with a multitude of hoods and capes piled one on top of the other.

"Who may this extraordinary person be," I said to myself, "and is he coming to my house, or is he directing his path towards me by mistake?"

But these meditations of mine were speedily resolved by that same mysterious person himself, who entered my little parlour with the extremely elegant propriety which always so greatly pleases me. First of all, the visitor asked my blessing, and then, with a scrape of his extremely small foot on the floor, as he simultaneously retreated a couple of paces, he began: "My mistress, Márfa Andréevna Plodomásóff, has com-

¹ The leader of a rebellion under Katherine II. TRANSLATOR.

manded me, Father priest, to present her respects to you, and she begs that you will do her the favour to come to her, at once, with me."

"Permit me, sir," I said, in my turn, "to know from whom I have the honour to hear all this?"

"I," replied the little man, "am the serf of her Excellency, Márfa Andréevna,—Nikolái Afanásieff," and having thus introduced himself to me, the tiny person again reminded me that his mistress was awaiting me.

"Do you know on what business?" I said.

"I, her slave, cannot know her ladyship's will, Father," replied the dwarf, and by this modest answer to my improper question confused me to such a degree that I even began to try to wriggle out of the scrape, and pretend that that had not been my meaning in the least when I inquired. I was thankful to him that he did not ask: "Then in what sense was your question put?"

While I was dressing in the adjoining room, this interesting dwarf entered into conversation with Natásha, and completely fascinated and enraptured her with his remarks. And really, in his words and even in the manner of speech of this tiny old man there was something inexpressibly pleasing, and withal, nobility and graciousness. When our servant-maid gave him a glass of water, he laid a twenty-kopék piece on the tray, and when the maid was in doubt about taking the money, he became confused, and said: "No, má-tushka, be not offended, that is my custom," and when my wife came out to pomade my hair, he took charge of the slovenly wench who helps her mother the cook, and said: "Listen to the ducks yonder on the shore talking together. The elegant duck is saying to the bold drake: 'Kupí, kotý, kupí kotý!' and the drake replies: 'zakazál, zakazál!'"¹ The child burst out laughing, and I myself, could not refrain from smiling at this version in words of the birds' chatter-

¹ *Kupí kotý* = "buy peasant shoes." *Zakazál* = "I have ordered them." TRANSLATOR.

ing. It was quite worthy of La Fontaine or Ivan Krylóff.¹ I did not notice the road it passed so quickly in conversation with this remarkable dwarf: so much wit, purity and good sense did I find in all his observations.

But then came the principal thing: the hour arrived for my meeting with his isolated mistress.

It is a matter of no small wonderment to me that on approaching that meeting, I, who am not timid by nature, should have experienced a sensation something like timidity. Nikolái Afanásitch, after conducting me through a series of rooms whose sumptuousness and the neatness with which they were kept, surprised me, led me into a circular chamber with two rows of windows, decorated in semi-circles with coloured panes; here we found an old woman, only a little larger than Nikolái. As we entered, she was standing and grinding the handle of a large organ, and I came near mistaking her for the eccentric mistress of the house in person, and making my bow to her. But she, on catching sight of us, as we entered inaudibly on the thick rugs which covered the floor, immediately abandoned her music on our entrance, and fled, with something of the swift gait of a wild animal, into an adjoining room, whose doors were hung with a large curtain of white satin, on which divers Chinese figures were embroidered in coloured silks.

This woman, who had vanished in such haste behind the curtain, was—as I afterwards learned—the sister of Nikolái, and also a dwarf, but devoid of the agreeability visible in her brother's gentle exterior.

Nikolái also disappeared in the wake of his sister behind the same curtain, and directed me to wait in an armchair. And there, also, during the time I waited, which lasted about half an hour, I felt in my mouth that dry heat which is so familiar to me from former experience in my childhood, during examinations. But, at last, the waiting came to an end. Behind that same curtain I heard these words:

¹ Krylóff was a famous Russian fabulist of the early XIX century.
TRANSLATOR.

"And now show me that clever priest, who, as I have heard, is accustomed to speak the truth." And thereupon, the curtain flew apart, as though at a magic signal, and I beheld before me Madam Plodomásoff herself. Her voice which I had just heard, had already sufficiently contradicted my idea of her decrepitude, and her appearance contradicted it still more. The noblewoman stood before me in a strength which, to all appearances, could have no end. She was not large in size, and not particularly stout, yet she seemed to tower like a sovereign over every one. Her face preserves an expression of great severity and truthfulness, and, judging from her features, she must once have been very handsome. Her costume was decidedly peculiar, and not in accordance with the present fashion: her entire head was carefully wrapped about several times with a large light-brown shawl, after the manner of the Turks. Further upon her, so to speak, was a sort of casaquin of light-coloured cloth; then, under this casaquin, was a petticoat of brilliant-orange velvet, and tiny yellow shoes with lofty silver heels, and in her hand was a cane, with an amethyst head. On one side of her stood Nikolái Afanásitch, on the other, Márya Afanásievna, and behind her, the village priest, Father Alexyéi, who at her command had been ordained from among her serfs whom she had set at liberty.

"Good morning!" she said to me, without inclining her head in the least; and she added: "I am glad to see you."

In reply, I bowed to her, and, apparently, even made my reverence with exceptional dexterity.

"Approach and bless me," said she.

I advanced and gave her my blessing, and she took my hand and kissed it, which I was minded, in every way, to prevent.

"Don't draw your hand away," said she, on observing this. "It's not your hand but your office that I am kissing. Now sit down, and let us get a little acquainted."

We seated ourselves: she, I, and Father Alexyéi, while the dwarfs stood beside her.

"Father Alexyéi tells me that you possess the gift of preaching, and a good mind. He himself understands nothing about it, but probably he heard it from the people, and it is so long since I have seen clever people, that just out of boredom, I wanted to have a look at you. Be not angry with an old woman for that."

I got confused in my answers, and probably corresponded very little to what she had heard about my cleverness, but fortunately, she began to ask questions to which I was obliged to reply.

"I am told that you were sent here to teach the Schismatics?" she began.

"Yes," I said, "among other things they had that object in view when they sent me."

"I suppose," said she, "that it is a useless undertaking: teaching fools is equal to curing dead men."

I do not recall the precise words in which I replied, that I did not understand all the Schismatics to be complete fools.

"Well, and since you consider them intelligent, how many of them have you succeeded in instructing in the right way?"

"I can boast of no success whatever, so far, but there are reasons for it."

SHE. "Of what reasons do you speak?"

I. "The manner of dealing with them is inappropriate, and the evil grows through vacillation which they behold in ecclesiastical society, and in the clergy themselves."

SHE. "Well, as for evil, what evil is there in them? They are so-so, God's fools, and sin by having read deeply."

I. "But the Orthodox altar suffers, nevertheless, from this falling apart."

SHE. "Well, if you would serve that altar more faithfully, and not turn it into a shop, there could be no desertions from you. But now you all bargain for grace as though it were cloth."

I made no reply.

SHE. "Are you married, or a widower?"

I. "Married."

SHE. "Well, if God blesses you with children, invite me to be godmother: I'll go to the christening. I won't go myself: I'll send her, yonder, my dwarf, but if you will bring the child here, I will hold it at the font myself."

Again I thanked her, and, in order to say something, I inquired:

"Your Excellency probably is fond of children?"

"What sensible man isn't fond of children? They are the kingdom of God."

"And have you lived alone a long time?"

SHE. "Yes, alone, Father, alone, this long time," she said, with a sigh.

I. "Such loneliness is often very burdensome."

SHE. "What is?"

I. "Loneliness."

SHE. "But aren't you alone?"

I. "How can I be alone, seeing that I have a wife?"

SHE. "Well, and does your wife understand everything which may grieve and pain you, as a clever man?"

I. "I am happy in my wife, and I love her."

SHE. "You love her? But you love her with your heart, but you stand alone, nevertheless, so far as the thoughts of your soul are concerned. Don't pity me because I live alone: every one, my dear man, who looks into a family any further than his brother's nose, perceives that he is solitary among his own. I also have a son, but I have not seen him for two years, for it seems he is bored here with me."

I. "Where is your son now?"

SHE. "My son is commanding a regiment in Poland."

I. "It is a valiant thing to subdue the enemies of the Fatherland."

SHE. "I don't know how much valour there may be about our fussing over those horrid little Poles at the present time, but, in my opinion, there's twice too much fruitless bother about it."

I. "We shall set matters to rights in due time."

SHE. "That time will never come, because it is already past, while we stood like snipe in the marsh, with a long bill and a long tail: we thrust forward our bill, and our tail sticks fast; we pull the tail free, and our beak is stuck fast. We vacillate and amuse the fools: first we treat the Poles to a taste of kazák whips, and then we kiss the hands of the dear, crafty little Poles; 'tis sinful and disgusting to spoil people so."

"At any rate," said I, "our troops there are keeping the Poles from doing us any mischief."

"They aren't keeping them from anything whatever," she replied, "and those Poles would not be a terror to us, either, if we had not taken a vow to devour each other."

"Your Excellency's censure seems to be somewhat unnecessarily severe," I remarked.

SHE. "Nothing is too severe when it is true."

"You probably recall the year '12," I replied: "and how much unanimity of feeling was displayed then."

SHE. "Certainly, how could I fail to remember? I was looking out of this very window when our horrid kazáks beat my peasants and robbed my granaries."

"Well, it may be that such a thing occurred," I said. "I am not defending the reputation of the kazáks in the least; but, at any rate, we heroically withstood the man before whom all Europe lay prostrate."

SHE. "Yes, it came out all right; since God and the cold weather helped us, we withstood him."

This declaration, which was so scornful and so unjust, had such an unpleasant effect upon me, that I retorted, without making any attempt to conceal my displeasure:

"And is it possible, madam, that, in your opinion, everything in Russia happens merely as an isolated accident? Admit one such case, admit two cases—but when the third occurs, grant a little intelligence to the national valour of the leaders," I said.

"Everything is accident, Father, and in everything which concerns this empire, with the exception of God's will, I have never seen anything but pure chance. If those Schismatics of yours had surprised and seized little Peter-the-Warrior,¹ we would have been sitting to this present day on our much-lauded land not as a great empire, but in the rôle of thick-lipped Turkish Bulgarians, and we would have been kissing the hands of those Poles. We may thank our stars for one thing—there are a great many of us: we shall be a long time devouring one another; that fact serves us as a good guarantee."

"It is sad," I said.

"But you must not be melancholy; other lands deserve praise, but our land also will be strong. But you and I have talked enough, and I am tired. Farewell; and if anything bad happens, please appeal to me. You must not regard me as a useless mushroom: mushrooms are alive in the forests, you know, and even in the towns people know about them. And if they attack you, rejoice at it; if you were flattering or stupid, they would not attack you, but would laud you, and hold you up as an example for others."

When she had uttered these words, she turned to the woman dwarf, who had been holding a parcel in her hands during the whole time of our conversation, and giving it to me, she said:

"Give this to your wife from me—it contains corals from my own neck; the material for two gowns, and linen for household use, and here is a ruby ring for you from me."

This gift, although it was offered in all simplicity, rather abashed me, and as I gazed at the strings of corals and at the silken material, and the brilliantly-blazing ruby, I said:

"Madam! I thank you for your very flattering attention to us; but these articles are so magnificent, and my wife is so simple a woman. . . ."

"Well," she interrupted me, "it is so much the better then,

¹ Peter the Great. TRANSLATOR.

that you have a simple wife; for where the husband and the wife both wear the breeches, matters go badly. The best of all is when the wife goes about in her woman's petticoat, and so do you carry her these petticoats from me. Women love gifts, and I love to make them. Take them, and God be with you."

Thereupon she terminated her conversation with me, and, I must admit, unspeakably amazed me. Thanks to my habit of logical thinking, as I drove homeward, enjoying the silence of that same Nikolái Afanásievitch who had offered to be my escort, I tried to elucidate to myself what moral sense all that she had said contained? And I found therein no logical sequence, or descried very little of it, but merely a lot of scraps of ideas; but the scraps were of a sort which one remembers, and which one will hardly succeed in forgetting. I am convinced that those people do not lie who were wont to call that woman, in her day, extremely brainy. But the chief thing which astonishes me is, my own incoherence in her presence, and whether I must ascribe it to the fact that, at the outset, my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, and if I began to talk about anything, it turned out quite imbecile, while she—as though to ridicule me—turned the conversation capriciously, and when I was worrying how to present myself in a more intelligent light, in order that she might not be too severely disappointed in me, paid no heed whatever to my efforts, and, evidently, did not prepare her own words, and did not put my mind to the test, and with it all, she has turned out to be a woman whom I cannot forget. In what does her power consist? I think it must be in the worldly training, which our ecclesiastical teachers neglect, the result being that frequently, through the lack of it, we are deprived of that presence of mind and adroitness which are absolutely indispensable in our intercourse with worldly persons.

But it was decreed that the day was not to end with this, but it was fated, evidently, that it should terminate with a fresh surprise. Before the joy of my simple-minded Natásha

over her gifts had succeeded in comforting me, that most remarkable little dwarf, Nikolái Afanásievitch, who had instantly won for himself my entire respect, began to present his gifts to us. First he presented to me some white paper with red edges, some knitted suspenders, and then to my wife a kerchief of soft, rabbit's wool, and before my surprise at the strangeness of these new, unexpected gifts was exhausted, he pulled out of his pocket some woollen stockings, and handed them to our servant-maid Aksínya, who was just bringing in the samovár. "What a day of gifts!" I involuntarily exclaimed, not daring to wound the giver by refusing them. But to this he replied, that they were all his own handiwork. "Having no need to work," said he, "thanks to my benefactress, and not being instructed in anything else, I constantly occupy myself with knitting, in order not to pass the time in idleness, and that I may have the satisfaction of presenting some of my work to some one or other." This simplicity so pleased me, that I clasped the little man to my breast, and nearly suffocated him with the kisses I showered upon him.

But shall I ever finish my description of this day? Even when the servitor of Madam Plodomásóff had taken his departure, all the marvels of this day were not ended. While she was fastening the door of the front room for the night, Aksínya espied something hanging on the clothes-hooks which did not appear to belong to us, and when Natásha and I were summoned by the maid, we found: first, an under-cassock of dark brown *gros de Naples*; next, a rich worsted girdle with dark-red ribbons to tie it; and, thirdly, a cassock of the most costly, green uncut velvet; fourthly, wrapped in a long piece of calico, a complete set of vestments for a priest. We were simply stunned by this discovery, and knew not how to explain its origin; but Aksínya was the first to espy a card attached to the button on the collar of the cassock, upon which in huge letters, of Egyptian style, so to speak, was written: "Friend, Father Savély, remember the servant of God Márfa in your prayers." We exclaimed in astonishment, but there was nothing to be done, and we began to spread out my new vestments

on the table. And then still greater things awaited us. No sooner had Natášha begun to shake out the priestly stole, than we beheld a sealed envelope addressed to me fall out of it, and in that envelope were five hundred rubles, with the very tiniest little note, written by the same hand. It said: "In order that as you stand at the altar you may not be too greatly troubled as to the future of your family in time of misfortune, buy yourself a cottage, and raise pumpkins; then you will be able to think more calmly about arranging the affairs of God."

Now, why give me this? How am I worthy of it? Why does not she argue, like the secretary of the Consistory and the sacristan, that it is easier to attend to the affairs of God when one has not where to lay one's head? Of a truth, what sort of an event is this?

And now, Priest Savély, here you are not homeless! And you are going to have your own cottage; but—alas!—I must add, that you will have it thanks to chance.

November 25th. I went to Plodomásoff to express my gratitude; but Márfa Andréevna did not receive me, because, said the dwarf Nikolái, she does not like to have people thank her; he added: "But you have done extremely well, father, nevertheless, in coming, otherwise she would have felt uneasy as to your gratitude." One may conclude that there is a whole vast sea of capriciousness in this person. Thus, for example, my new friend Nikolái, told me how she had done her best to get him married. "What for?" I inquired. "For the sake of little dwarfs, she said, father." That is to say, she wanted to breed little people! Now, who ever heard of such a whim! As though the people round about us were so very large!

December 6th. Yesterday I carried to the sacristy the vestments sent me by the noblewoman, and today I celebrated the liturgy in them. Everything fitted me splendidly; but hitherto, when donning the vestments of my deceased predecessor, a man of very small stature, I was far from adorning myself with the majesty of the Church, for I am such a beanpole, that clothed in them I looked like a sparrow with his tail-feathers pulled out.

December 9th. Extraordinary! The father archpriest is sulking at me, but I am at ease in my mind, as I am not conscious of any wrong towards him.

December 12th. There has been a certain amount of explanation between the father archpriest and myself, and why? Because of the Plodomásóff cassock—because Madam Plodomásóff did not give it to the church, as she should have done; and he added, that “various rumours are in circulation, to the effect that you have received something more from her.” Now, what does this mean—that to all appearance, I have not handed over all that was given to the church, but have stolen something?

December 23rd. Here are rumours in sooth! Ah, my merciful God! Ah, my all-just Creator! Not to mention my honour, not to mention her years, they have not even spared my office, which is so precious to me! The vile wretches! But this is so base that I am determined not to take offence.

December 29th. I am beginning to notice that the Prefect and his officials here are not well-inclined towards me, but why is beyond my power to guess. I proposed to arrange in my house during the Christmas holidays a discussion with the Schismatics, but this suddenly became known in the capital of the government, and was looked upon there as unpermissible, and I received a reprimand for my zeal. I cannot but think that the Prefect is commissioned to keep a sharp watch on me. But the best thing to do is to treat it jestingly, for the present. But I have sprinkled myself with holy water to protect myself against the enemy and the spy.

January 1st. Bless thou the crown of the year with thy goodness, O Lord, and give priest Savély fresh success in the government. Apparently, my sprinkling had no effect on my foes.

January 7th. Yesterday, at the Blessing of the Water, Madam Plodomásóff jumped into the cut in the ice just as she was, in all her clothing.¹ I was amazed! I inquired whether

¹ The Blessing of the Water on Epiphany Day, in commemoration of Christ's Baptism, is meant. TRANSLATOR.

she always did that? They told me she did, and that she called it "washing."

What astonishing toughness! I don't believe I should survive such a bath.

January 20th. I write these lines as I sit in the evil stench at the Bishop's residence, in the Seminary building. To my offence concerning the discussions with the Schismatics another crime has been added: it has been reported to the Governor that my chanter sexton, Lukyán, has "exchanged"¹ to the Schismatics a Psalter printed in ancient times, one of the books of the Dyeff oratory, which are in my keeping. The thing actually happened, but I concealed it, regarding it, in the first place, as decidedly insignificant, and, in the second place, being aware of its real cause—the poverty which drove Lukyán the chanter to it. But this trivial affair is set down as a villainous crime on my part, and I have been placed under ecclesiastical censure, and sent to the Seminary kvas-department, to brew kvas.

February 4th. Yesterday, without any special request on my part, I received from Father Troádiy's personal attendant a little book which is extremely rare, but which, nevertheless, it is even obligatory always to be acquainted with, although in Russia it seems to have been published for the express purpose of keeping it a secret from those who are bound to know it. It is "The Ecclesiastical Statutes"; I read it with angry deliberation. I recognize to the full the greatness of this legislator, and I understand the delicate foresight of those who buy this book. What else could they do? Therein is written for example: "Every Bishop must know the measure of his honour, and not think loftily of it. This is set forth for the purpose of restraining the very harsh glory of bishops, so that they may not be led by the arms when they are well,"² and that

¹ The Old Believers never speak of buying or selling a Church book, the Scriptures, or the holy pictures (ikóni). They always use the word "exchange." TRANSLATOR.

² It is customary—both for convenience and for respect—to support a Bishop by the elbows. TRANSLATOR.

the inferior brethren may not bow down to the earth before them. And these worshippers willingly and arrogantly stretch themselves on the earth, in order to solicit for themselves offices of which they are unworthy, and in this manner to hide their deviltries and thievery." Consequently, by forcing me to *prostrate* myself before him the one who forces me is the very first of all to break the law, and becomes a criminal in the face of that statute of the Empire which is kept concealed. It is also written there: "And it is especially forbidden to rob, under penalty of severe chastisement, for a bishop's servants are generally greedy animals, and where they behold the power of their master, there they seek, with great arrogance and shamelessness, to seize the spoils."

Magnificent, sir, magnificent!

April 9th. I returned from my punishment to my own hearthstone. I was greatly touched by the tears of my wife, who has suffered severely here without me, and I was even more deeply touched by the tears of chanter Lukyán's wife. Saying nothing about herself, this woman thanked me for having suffered for her husband. But Lukyán has been sent to a hermitage, though only for one year. It is such a short term that his family will not suffer, even though they do not eat. He will be close to God, according to the calculations of the Consistory.

April 20th. The agreeable dwarf came to me, and informed me, that Márfa Andréevna had given orders that I am invited to celebrate service in her church at Plodomásovo, thrice every year, at the summer St. Nicholas, the winter St. Nicholas, and Epiphany Day,¹ for which I shall be paid by the overseer a salary of one hundred and fifty rubles, at the rate of fifty rubles for each mass. Now, just see those happenings! Before I know it, I shall even begin to be afraid of them.

August 15th. Yevtíkheitch the sacristan returned from the government town and said that a sort of altercation had arisen

¹ That is: the Feast of St. Nicholas, Dec. 6th., and the Feast of St. Nicholas of Bari (the removal of his relics to Bari, Italy), on May 9th.

TRANSLATOR.

between the Bishop and the Governor about calling on each other.

October 2nd. The rumours about the quarrel over calling are confirmed. The Governor, who attends the cathedral on Imperial anniversaries, has a habit of conversing quite loudly on such occasions. The Bishop undertook to put a stop to this habit, and sent his crozier-bearer to request His Excellency to conduct himself with more propriety. The Governor took the remark in great dudgeon, and after a little renewed his loud conversation with the Colonel of gendarmes; but this time the Bishop himself stopped short, and said in a loud voice:

“Well, Your Excellency, I will hold my peace, and begin again when you have finished.”

I greatly approve of this on the part of the Bishop.

November 8th. I have received the epigonation.¹ I do not know to what to ascribe this. Possibly to that little affair about the calls and the fact that the Governor does not favour me.

January 6th, 1837. A fresh piece of news! At the New Year, the Bishop stopped the Governor's daughter when she came up to receive the blessing in her gloves, and said:—“Take that dog's hide off your hand first.” I never knew before that our Governor's wife was not a foreigner.

February 1st. With the permission of the Bishop I have been presented as candidate for a *skufyá*.²

March 17th. The priest of the Bogoyávlensky church, while going away by night with the Holy Gifts from a sick man, was dragged to the station-house by the soldiers of the patrol, under the pretext that he was intoxicated. On the following day, the Bishop went to see him, wearing his mantle. O you miserable Polish Governor, you'll have cause now to remember this trick of yours!

May 18th. The Bishop is transferred to another diocese.

August 16th. I have been to call on the new Bishop. He

¹ A distinction for good service, consisting of a square piece of brocade suspended on the right hip during church services. TRANSLATOR.

² A pointed cap of purple velvet—a reward of merit.—TRANSLATOR.

appeared to be a very sagacious man, with plenty of character. He talked about the condition of the clergy, and ordered me to draw up a memorandum for him on the subject. He said that I had been recommended to him by the former Bishop as an excellent man. I thank thee, poor, dear old man, who hast been conquered by the wicked, for thy good word!

December 25th. I know not what to think of myself, why I was born, and to what I have been called. My wife reproaches me for working even on this festival of the Lord's Nativity, but I find no greater satisfaction than this work. I am writing my memorandum about the conditions of the clergy's existence with more joy, and more love than I am able to express. I have entitled it: "Concerning the Situation of the Orthodox Clergy, and the Means of elevating them, for the Profit of the Church and of the Empire." I think that will be good. Never do I remember to have been so happy before, and so triumphant, so amiable, and so filled to overflowing with force and understanding.

April 1st. I have presented my memorandum to the Bishop. My wife says that I ought not to have put this date on it: according to her frivolous signs, the first of April is deceitful. We shall see.

August 10th. I have been advanced to be Archpriest.

January 4th, 1839. I received a packet from the Consistory, and my heart, oppressed by foreboding, began to beat with joy; it did not concern my memorandum, however, but a pectoral cross has been given to me. I thank you, I thank you greatly; but I am worried over the date of my memorandum.

April 8th. I am appointed Ecclesiastical District Superintendent. Not a word about the memorandum. I don't know how to make these trumpets sound forth.

April 10th, 1840. A year has passed since I was made Superintendent. Not a hint as to the memorandum. Evidently, what my wife believes in is not all folly. Today she made me laugh, by saying that perhaps I had written well, but had not signed properly.

June 20th, 1841. I have passed over the sea dry-shod, and

I have escaped the malice of the Egyptians, therefore will I sing praises to my God so long as I live. What is this that has happened with me? What have I not endured, and how I have emerged from it into God's sunlight? I am extremely curious to know what you would do, you composers of fables and ballads and novels and romances, without looking at the threads of the life which surround you and worthy of being plaited together into a fable entertaining to the reader? Or you, you reformers of men's morals, who really have no concern about that actual life which men live, and merely need pretexts for empty-worded rantings? Do you know what sort of a life is led by the Russian priest, that "useless man," who, according to you has been summoned, perhaps unnecessarily, to greet your birth, and who will be summoned once more, equally against your will, to escort you to the grave? Do you know that the miserable life of that priest is not scanty but abounding in wretchedness and adventures, or do you think that his priestly heart is inaccessible to noble passions, and that it feels no sufferings? Or are you, from your lofty position as author, unwilling to vouchsafe your attention to me, a priest? Or do you think that my day is already past, and that I am no longer necessary to the land which has brought forth and has nourished you and me? . . . O how blind you are! if you think the first I will say to you: O stupid man! I will say to you, if you think the second, and by virtue of that conclusion do not make haste to raise and resuscitate me, but only to cast a stone at me and jeer because I, the vulgar man, have begun to perish.

But I will descend from philosophizing to the event which caused me to fall into that philosophizing strain.

I am degraded from the rank of Superintendent and have come near being deprived of my priestly office. And for what? For this. I will record this story in detail.

In the month of March of this year, when the Governor passed through our town, the Marshal of the Nobility made a festival of the occasion, and I, taking advantage of the opportunity offered by my meeting the Governor, addressed to that

official a complaint about the way the landed proprietors oppress the peasants with work on Sundays and even on the Twelve Great Feast Days; and I said, that the extreme poverty of the people is thereby still further augmented, for there are whole villages where not a single man has rye or oats. . . . But no sooner had I uttered that word "oats" than my official flew into a fury with me, jumped away from me as though I had been some sort of vermin, and shouted: "What do you mean by worrying me about oats! See here now, I say, thus and so, and in conclusion, I'm not Saint Nicholas, and I don't deal in oats, I'd have you know!" I was compelled to endure this, and replied: "First of all, Your Excellency, I must explain to you since you are a man not initiated in matters of the faith, that Saint Nicholas was a Bishop, and did not deal in anything at all. And in the next place you must know, that the Orthodox people require a priest and a deacon, for up to the present time we have not borrowed them from the foreigners." With a malicious laugh at my words, the Governor remarked to me: "Never fear, father, wherever there's a swamp the devils will find each other!" This last thing was more bitter to me than the first. Who are the devils here, and what does your base mouth call a swamp?—I said to myself in anger, and not restraining myself, I replied to that Polish lord, that "as I respected my office, I would not call him a devil even on this occasion." And how has it ended for me? Now I am an ex-superintendent, and glory to Thee, my Creator, that I am not also an ex-priest, and unfrocked! No, this is what you contemporary inventors of novels will not write. You will not try to make people understand how hard it is for me!

September 3rd. Autumnal weather always makes me feel terribly depressed. I have grown accustomed to be constantly busy, but now I languish without occupation, and to such a pitch of stupidity, that I frequently weep without my wife knowing it.

January 27th, 1842. I have bought a little organ, and checkers for seven rubles from a little Jew.

May 18th. I have got a bulfinch in a cage, and am training him to sing to the accompaniment of the organ.

August 9th. I have begun to compose a novel from my ecclesiastical experience. Our good women appear to me in the nature of my mother, the daughter of a supernumerary deacon, who supported us all with her work; but when I think—I see all this in the most vivid manner;—yet when I try to write it down, it does not turn out well. No, I have no capacity in that line!

March 2nd, 1845. Three years have passed without any change in my life. I have established my little house, and busied myself with reading the Fathers of the Church, and the historians. I have made two deductions, and I wish to confess that they are erroneous. The first of them is, that Christianity has not been preached in Russia yet; and the second is, that events repeat themselves, and that one may predict them. I talked over the first deduction once with my fairly learned colleague, Father Nikolái, and was astonished that he understood me and agreed with me. “Yes,” said he, “that is indisputable,—that we have been baptized in Christ but have not yet put on Christ.” Evidently, I am not the only one who perceives this, for others perceive it also, but why do they all find it so ridiculous, while my heart fairly bleeds over it?

New Year’s Day, 1846. They are beginning to send Poles to us. No news yet about my memorandum. I am taking a strong interest in the political upheaval which is beginning in the West, and have subscribed to a political newspaper.

May 6th, 1847. Two new Poles have arrived, the Roman Catholic priest Aloysius Konarkévitch, and Mr. Ignáty Tchemernítzky, the latter a very young man, but already a very thorough rascal. Our Prefect’s wife, being a Pole, has gathered about her a whole crowd of her fellow-countrymen, and has become particularly intimate with this last-named. They say this is because the young man is exceptionally good-looking and charming in his manners; but I have a suspicion that there is something more than that.

November 20th. I notice something very surprising and

incomprehensible: the Poles who dwell among us behave as though they were our lords, and everything in the government is to be obtained through them, for it appears that Tchemer-nitzky is a friend of my superior.

February 5th, 1849. I have now done that which I have never wished to do: I have written a good-sized denunciation of the Poles, for they have exceeded all bounds. Not satisfied with having, this long time past, openly made merry over our newspaper items, and representing that everything in the newspapers is set forth not as it really is, but in exactly the opposite sense,—that we are being beaten, instead of our beating our enemies, they have now proceeded from words to deeds. At the Requiem Service for Warriors Slain on the Field of Battle, the Poles along with the Prefect's wife raised such an unseemly laugh, that the father Archpriest sent one of the clerics to request them to be quiet, or to withdraw, whereupon, they smilingly left the temple. But when the staff and I, after finishing the service, were passing the grocer-shop of the Lyalin Brothers, one of the Poles came forth upon the porch with a glass of wine in his hand, and imitating the voice of the deacon proclaimed: "Is this too much?"¹ I understood that this was intended as ridicule of the *Many Years*, and so I described it, and I am not ashamed of it, and do not regard myself as an informer, for I am a Russian, and delicacy with such people must be deemed out of place.

April 1st. Evening. My report about the conduct of the Poles, though belated, has, evidently, had some effect. This morning an official of gendarmes arrived in town, and invited me to come to him, and questioned me long and in detail about the whole affair. I narrated everything as it had occurred; but he announced to me that there would soon be an end of all these Polish abominations against Russia. I am afraid, however, that all this, unfortunately, was said to me

¹ What the Pole burlesqued was the proclamation of Long Life—(Many Years), which in Russian is *Mnógaya lyéta*. He said: *mnógo li éto*. TRANSLATOR.

as befitting the first of April. I am beginning to believe that it is, really, a deceitful date.

September 7th. I suspect that the first of April did not deceive, in this case: Konarkévitch and Tchemernítzky are both transferred for residence to the government capital.

November 25th. Our Prefect and his wife are to go; he is appointed Chief of Police in the government capital. However, that is not much of a punishment for him.

December 5th. A new Prefect has arrived. His name is Captain Mratchkóvsky. His surname is derived from the word *Mrak*—darkness. Thou, O Lord, alone knowest when something will come to us from the light!

December 9th. I breakfasted with the new Chief of Police today. Both he and his wife are extremely amiable. After having drunk a good deal, he sang to us: "Dost thou remember, comrade, the martial glory?" And then his little son, clad in a Russian blouse, also sang: "Ah Frost, dear little frost, a dashing Russian lad art thou!" This somehow, is the freshest novelty! The peculiarity, however, of this Mratchkóvsky's conversation lies, for me, in his story about a certain professor of the Moscow University, who was dismissed—so he says—for having said, at the solemn graduation exercises: "*Nunquam de republica desperandum*," in the sense that "no one should despair of the Empire," but some wiseacre in the chancellery understood that he was exhorting people not to despair of a republic, and so he was dismissed. It is fairly incredible.

December 12th. I have read in the newspapers, that while a peasant was bending over the water a small pike jumped into his mouth, and sticking there with its gills, could not be extracted, so that the gaper died of it. After this, what is there that one cannot believe in Russia? I believe about the professor.

December 20th. Yes, the first of April is not only deceitful but puzzling. I will not even write down all that happened to me during that trip to the government capital, but will

merely say, one thing—that I was reviled, and put to shame in every possible way, and all but beaten for my denunciation. I do not know from whose speeches it was, but our *He Himself* attacked me straight out with: “You have wearied people with your quibbling and quirking; it was a bad thing that you were taught to read and write, if you were going to use it to meddle with what does not concern you, and calumniate, and cavil.” O, thou Who seest my heart! When have I ever indulged in calumny, and at whom have I cavilled?

But I could make no answer, because every movement of my lips was greeted with a threatening “silence!” I got rid of everything else, and returning hither, I sit like a brood-hen which has been whipped with nettles, and keep repeating to myself that word “silence!” and I perceive that it is a sensible word. One thing I do not understand,—why my act, although it may have been indiscreet, but nothing more, is not explained as the result of my awkwardness and of my lack of breeding, but how do you think? as spite, because those Poles did not invite me, and did not get me drunk,—but to drunkenness, I thank my God, I am not addicted. Drawing my conclusions from this little thing as to great ones, I recall the words of the French maiden, Charlotte Corday d’Armond, which she wrote in the letter before her execution: that “among new nations there are few patriots who are able to comprehend the simplest patriotic fervor, or would believe in the possibility of sacrificing anything for it.” Egotism is everywhere, and it explains everything. It may be that, gazing at my own people alone, I might be inclined to arrive at the same conclusion as Corday d’Armond, but having before my eyes those same Poles, with whom every pine-tree, no matter how distant, rustles to its own grove, and the Schismatics, who cannot be forced by any insults or persecutions to cease to love Russia, I am involuntarily obliged to contradict her, and to think that people do feel love for their fatherland! To this point do one’s thoughts lead him when he lives long,—that one will praise even the Poles for something. But may that “silence!”

which I so recently heard ring in my ears these days. *Nunquam de republica desperandum.*

January 2nd, 1849. I went about to all the Schismatics, and collected silver coins at their gates. This is no time for me to offer resistance, but I felt it bitterly at some moments; still, I did it, in order that I might not have to dress my wife like a chanter's wife, for after what has happened with me, even that is possible.¹

I went to the chief of police's also: he knows all that has happened with me, and expressed great sympathy in words, but God only knows what is in his heart. But what is really worthy of laughter is a sally of our fashionable young Madame Biziúkin, the wife of an official. "Is it true," she asked me, "that you denounced the Poles? How base that was. After that you're nothing but a calumniator and an informer. How much did they pay you for it?" In reply to this I said to her: "And you're nothing but a fool, and an unpaid fool at that!"

January 1st, 1850. The year has passed quietly and peacefully. I have buried my benefactress Márfa Andréevna Plodomásoff. She died after having lived under five Sovereigns: Elizabeth, Peter, Katherine, Paul and Alexander, and with two of these she had danced at the Assemblies. I have been expecting some unpleasantness from Madame Biziúkhin, who is influential, and might endeavour to revenge herself on me through the government, but everything passed off beautifully: we Russians, however hot-tempered we may be at times, evidently are not rancorous, perhaps because we have no one to defend us. I am thinking of taking myself in hand this coming year, for I have fallen into a certain weakness: I have taken a liking for playing Preference, and have begun to smoke, out of boredom and all this entails expense. I first smoked, as a joke, at the chief of police's, but now I have provided myself with all the appurtenances at home. I ought to drop it.

1850. I ought to drop it. No, my dear fellow, you will

¹ Evidently, he is afraid of being unfrocked. TRANSLATOR.

not drop it. I have become so accustomed to smoking that I cannot break off. I have decided not to exterminate this weakness, but as an offset to it take into my house some homeless orphan, and rear him. I place very little hope on my *popadyá* Natálya Nikoláevna: she gives me a hint that she has expectations, but every time it turns out as though it were the first of April.

January 1st, 1857. I simply do not recognize myself. Seven years—and not a single line have I written. My life is strange—on the other hand, it has become prosperous and comfortable. I have read over everything herein recorded since the day I received my title of “Very Reverend” as Archpriest. It is worthy of note how differently I have come to bear myself towards everything during these years. I no longer contend myself, I disturb no one else, and I am not disturbed myself. “The grey horse has rolled down steep mountains”—I have gone through a severe course of schooling, and I no longer care to kick against the pricks.

February 20th. The grateful nobility have chosen a new commissioner of police for us, my friend the Pole, whom I denounced in the days of my youthful refractoriness, Pan¹ Tchemernítsky. He has married one of our wealthy Russian widows, and has become one of our landed proprietors, and now he is commissioner of police. In Mr. Tchemernítsky I shall, undoubtedly, have an enemy, and, in all probability, a very grievous enemy.

April 7th. The new Police Commissioner, Pan Tchemernítsky, came himself to call upon me. He makes no mention of our ancient quarrel over “*mnógo li éto.*”

May 20th. I have read the foreign Russian journal “*Kólokol*”² of Mr. Iskander, for the first time at the house of the police commissioner. His speech is daring, and has a great

¹ *Pan* is the Polish equivalent of “Mr.” but denotes also noble birth.
TRANSLATOR.

² Alexander Herzen’s famous paper, “The Bell” (*Kólokol*), published in London, under his pen-name, “Iskander.” TRANSLATOR.

deal of style, but not being used to boldness, it seems wild to me.

June 2nd. Yesterday, which was my Saint's day, I had a banquet. I had intended to have a modest affair, in consonance with my means, but Tchemernítzky sent round a whole basketful of wine and delicacies and rum in the morning, and in the evening Tchemernítzky and the new prefect, Porókhontzeff, descended upon me. He is an amiable man, this prefect. After he had drunk a tremendous lot, he suddenly began to make peace between me and Tchemernítzky on that old score, and I became reconciled, and begged forgiveness, and we exchanged a great many kisses. I don't know why I should have done this, unless I was a bit under the influence of liquor myself?

This morning I expressed great regret to the peace-maker Porókhontzeff, but he said, in his regimental-colonel manner, that I mustn't regret having exchanged kisses while intoxicated, for that is always better than to get into a fight after drinking. That is quite true, but nevertheless, I am vexed. Today, when I celebrated a service of prayer at the mayor's, I whacked myself on the nose with the holy-water sprinkler, and delivered an edifying exordium to myself: "Don't you drink liquor, priest!"

August 23rd. I have read Madame Dáshkoff's "Memoirs,"¹ and about Pável Petróvitch; all published abroad. It is all very curious. I agree with Madame Dáshkoff's opinions, in many points, except as regards Peter,—as to him, I think differently. However, I am indebted to Tchemernítzky for relieving my extreme boredom with these rare books.

September 9th. I have had a falling-out with Tchemernítzky at Porókhontzeff's wedding. That arrogant Pole scoffingly inquired of ingenuous Father Zakháriya, what it meant when we chant at a wedding: "they asked life of Thee"?

¹ About Katherine II, and her times. Pável Petróvitch—the Emperor Paul I. Katherine's son. These "Memoirs" were not approved by the authorities in Russia. Peter was Katherine's husband. TRANSLATOR.

And an altercation ensued, as to what was meant in this place by the word.¹ I interposed, and said that he would understand, if the noose was ever put on him under the gallows.

September 20th. I am utterly amazed. The chanter's widow through ignorance, sent to her son through the post a one-rouble banknote, in a plain envelope, but they opened the envelope in the post-office and having discovered the widow's crime, they confiscated her enclosure and subjected her to a fine.² That letters are opened and read in the post-office is no news to any one; but how is it that they capture the widow's ruble-bill, but do not capture the "Kólokol," which I get from the commissioner of police? What is this: artless simplicity, or thievery?

October 20th. In the place of our deceased deacon, the meek Prókhor, a new deacon, Akhílla Desnítzin, has arrived from the government capital. He is taller than any of us, stouter than any of us, and with such a physiognomy and figure that when one looks at him one cannot refrain from marvelling at nature's powers of growth. He has a very good voice, a very cheerful disposition, and at first he seemed to me to be extremely deferential. But what pleases me most about this man is his amiability. He presented to me a copy of his seminary certificate, on which was written: "his conduct is good, but he is a good carrier." "But what is the meaning of that?" I asked. "Oh, that is utter nonsense," he explained, "it only means that once, when I was sick in the seminary hospital with a fever, I carried liquor in to the sick theologians." Capital!

December 9th. I have received the kamilávka³ and the

¹ The word in question (*zhivot*) also means abdomen. TRANSLATOR.

² Letters containing money or valuables must be taken, unsealed, to the post-office, where the official inspects the enclosure, sees that it corresponds with the description of contents written (by law) on the outside, seals and insures it. The Post Office, having thus secured itself against fraud, is responsible for safe delivery. TRANSLATOR.

³ A purple velvet cap of honour, in shape like a reversed, truncated cone. TRANSLATOR.

cross of St. Anna. And at the instance of whom, do you suppose? Why, all this comes through the testimony of my gracious patron Pan Tchemernítzky, to my zeal as Ecclesiastical Superintendent.

March 7th, 1858. There has been an exodus of the Israelites: all my friends,—the Governor, and his manager have gone to St. Petersburg to guide Russia into all good, and have got our Tchemernítzky assigned to them in a fine position, to boot. But I am sincerely sorry that he is leaving us. Life will be more boresome than ever.

December 7th. Thanks to a hint from chanter Sergyéi, I have noticed that our new deacon Akhílla is somewhat of a coward through false pride; he bestows the priestly blessing in secret on many worshippers who come from the villages, and as he does so, he holds the right sleeve of his dalmatic with his left hand. I have told him that he must, by no means, permit himself to do this hereafter.¹

July 18, 1859. Deacon Akhílla has been caught again bestowing blessings. In order to diminish his likeness to a priest, I have taken away from him the walking-stick—which, moreover, he has no right to have with his rank. He has borne all this submissively, and thereby has softened me dreadfully.

August 15th. I have been feasting at the police commissioner's, and at that banquet there came near being a scandal, again because of a dispute as to wisdom, which reminded me of that old dispute over which I laughed in my youth. Deacon Akhílla and the doctor fought over me: the doctor denied my wisdom, and the deacon exalted it. Then I and the others entered, attracted by their uproar, and especially by the doctor's shouts, and found the doctor sitting on top of the cupboard, and waving his legs wildly in the air, while Akhílla, with the most tranquil mien possible, was sitting in an arm-chair in the middle of the room, and he said: "Please don't take him down. I have suspended him, as it

¹ The priest holds his chasuble in the manner described: and a deacon has no right to bestow the priestly benediction. TRANSLATOR.

were, above the waters, for his opposition." Restraining my laughter, I reprimanded the deacon severely for his mischievousness, and remarked that force was no proof. Thereupon he made me a reverence, and alluding to the doctor, he added: "Well, what of that? I think you can now see for yourself that he is the Minister of Justice." It is very remarkable how that kazák-like deacon seems to divine that I am mortally fond of him—without myself knowing why; and he also loves me, without trying to account to himself for the fact.

August 25th. What an immense joy! The Roman Catholic priests in Lithuania have founded a temperance society: they are preaching against drunkenness, and drunkenness is ceasing, and the populace are growing steady, and the blood-suckers of distillers are going to pieces. Ah, how I would like to preach in that fashion!

September 5th. The same thing has been introduced into several Orthodox societies.

I am afraid I shall not be able to forbear, and shall say something! I would like to speak after the manner of Kirill of Byelózersk: "The peasants ruin themselves with drink, and destroy their souls." But as I dare not preach like that without permission from the censor, I am going to set up by intrigue a temperance society here. It can't be helped, but one must follow Pater Ignatius Loyola, willy-nilly, when it is impossible to advance by the direct road.

October 7th. We have drawn up the plan for our society, but it has not yet been sanctioned; on the contrary, they write us that the farmer of the liquor revenue has complained to the Minister about the preachers, that they will not allow the people to drink. Oh, you insolent rascal! And you even dare to complain, and to the Minister, at that! . . .

October 20th. A horrid piece of news! The newspapers state that in July of this year the distillers complained to the Minister of the Interior about the Orthodox priests, who were restraining the people from drunkenness, and the Minister handed over that complaint to the Chief Procurator of

the Most Holy Synod, who replied, that "the Most Holy Synod blesses with its approval the zealous efforts of the ecclesiastics to aid in the introduction into certain classes, in town and country, of the excellent decision to refrain from the use of liquor." But the distillers did not cease their efforts, and again petitioned that the decree of the Holy Synod might be set aside, for by its aid, temperance societies would spring up everywhere. Then the Minister of Finance, it is said, communicated to the Chief Procurator of the Most Holy Synod, that the total prohibition of fiery liquor by means of religious threats and engagements under oath, which act powerfully on the minds of the common people, ought not to be permitted, as being opposed not only to the general conception concerning the moderate use of liquor, but also to those statutes on whose foundation the government had assigned the taxes on spirits for the support of the revenue farmers. Then, it is said, an order was promulgated, that the decrees of the town and country temperance societies are to be abrogated, and that hereafter no gatherings for this object are to be allowed anywhere, either in town or country.—Drink, poor people, and get drunk to your hearts' content!

November 8th. On this Feast of the Holy and Heavenly Powers, and of their Captain and Archistrategus Michael, an extremely strict injunction was sent to me, to the effect that I not only must not indulge in plots for the establishment of temperance societies, but that I must not even dare to preach about that subject, in view of this, and of that, and of t'other and which,—and everything except the benefit of mankind. . . . But what is the use of my recording this? I have to write down my shame altogether too continuously as it is!

January 1st, 1860. I even let the New Years pass by, and leave them unnoticed in any way. I bear myself with indifference to everything nowadays in precise proportion to the ardour with which I used to welcome everything that was touching. My archpriestess, Natálya Nikoláevna, says

that I am exactly the same today as I used to be then; but how can that be! It may seem so to her at any given moment, because she herself has now reached the age of Sarah, but it is all the more apparent to me. . . . My body is sound and even fat, but of what good is that when some sort of hard bark seems to have grown around my soul. I can see that something wonderful is ripening and systematically preparing in Russia; sometimes the populace are upheld and connived at in their evil inclinations, then, all of a sudden, the authorities begin to collect the taxes and behave ruthlessly, declaring that "this is by the Emperor's decree." It is astonishing that no one seems to see to what this is tending.

March 27th. The breath of spring is in the air, and in the middle of the day floods flow down from the hills. Deacon Akhilla is already putting his saddle in order, and is preparing to gallop off again like a Kirghiz of the steppe. 'Tis lucky for him that this amuses him: I do not interfere with him, for, really, the boredom is intolerable, and he is a man of lively temperament, so he must be allowed to have some sort of diversion.

April 23rd. Akhilla made his appearance with spurs, which he had specially ordered Pizonsky to prepare for his rides. The worst of it is, that he can never confine himself in anything to moderation, but invariably goes to extremes. In order to stop him, I broke those spurs off Akhilla's boots with my own hands, at one blow, and requested him, because of this folly, to renounce his riding altogether for this year. And so I have now put him under penance. But what is to be done, when it is impossible not to repress him. If I did not, he would be girding on a sword next.

September 2nd. Today chanter Sergyéi reported to me that the deacon is roaming about by night with a gun, hunting, and has shot two hares. I told Sergyéi that I did not believe it, but I gave the deacon a severe scolding.

September 9th. Nevertheless, I have no little trouble with that deacon: yesterday he thrashed chanter Sergyéi with a strap. I will not vouch for it, but perhaps it was by way of

vengeance for the man's having reported to me about the hunting; but he says that he chastized him for some blasphemy or other. In order that he might not fall under judgment to those servants of the Bishop whom a great Emperor deigned to designate as "dainty beasts," and "unsatiable Tatars," I called him and the beaten man to me, and insisted upon their making a reverence to each other, to the very earth, and becoming reconciled, remarking that Deacon Akhílla had done it all with the most excellent sincerity. Not a little of the gentleness of the dove is discernible, at times, in that man, despite his hot-headedness.

September 14th. Chanter Sergyéi, coming, ostensibly, to get a half-cask for cabbages, reported to me, quite accidentally, as it were, that Deacon Akhílla means to be present this evening at the performance of the passing juggler, who is to exhibit a strong man and a giant at the brick sheds. What an abominable and revengeful character that Sergyéi is!

September 15th. I went to see the performance, and without being seen myself, I had a good view of everything through a small crevice in the back gate. Akhílla really was present, but not as a spectator, but, so to speak, as an actor. He made his appearance in a big, uncovered ¹ peasant's sheepskin coat, with the collar turned up and tied with a fancy-figured woollen kerchief, which concealed his hair and the greater part of his face up to his very eyes, but, of course, I recognized him at once, and, moreover, it would have been difficult for any one not to recognize him, for when the giant and strong man imported by the clown came out clad in tights, and taking a five-pood ² weight in each hand, and staggering a little, carried this weight up and down before the benches, where the audience was sitting, Akhílla, forgetting himself, shouted with his big voice: "there's nothing wonderful about that!" Then, when the giant arrogantly challenged some one to wrestle with him, and no volunteers offered them-

¹ That is to say, the dressed leather on the outside was not covered with cloth. TRANSLATOR.

² About 180 pounds. TRANSLATOR.

selves for this contest, Akhílla, burying his face in the woollen kerchief which was bound about his head, stepped forward and grappled with him. I thought their bones would be crushed to pieces; first one would be squeezed, and then he would get the better, and so it went on for several minutes, but at last Akhílla broke that proud German and tying his legs in a knot, after the fashion in which roast chickens are served in the houses of the nobility, he grasped the ten poods, and the strong man himself, to boot, and began to walk up and down in front of the public with this whole load, while the public loudly shouted "bravo!" at him. But the most amazing thing was the finale which Akhílla performed: "Gentlemen!" said he, addressing the audience: "perhaps some one may take it into his head to persuade you that I am some one else: if he does, then do me the favour to spit on him, for I am simply burgher Iván Morózoff, from Syevsk." Just as though—please to observe—any one had asked him for that explanation. Still, all this amused me greatly in my tedium. Ah, in what things does life flow by! Ah, in what occupations has it already passed! On my way back from the sheds where the performance had taken place, I fell into a sort of nervous state, and began to weep—without knowing myself what I was crying about, but merely conscious of one thing, namely, that there was something which I must weep over, when I recall the extensive plans of my youth, and compare them with the way I have continued my life! Greatly-wronged man that I am, I used in former days to dream that I could lead my life with dignity, if not with outward activity, at least for self-perfection; but I am not a philosopher, but a plain citizen; and, worse than that, I feel a want, I grieve and suffer for the lack of activity, and for that reason I do not always condemn the lively propensities of my amiable Akhílla. May God forgive and bless him for the enchanting simplicity of his heart, in which everything comforts and delights him. I told Sergyéi-chanter that he had been talking nonsense about Akhílla, and

forbade him to pick flaws in him. I feel that I have come to love that kindly man with a truly paternal weakness.

May 14th, 1861. Into what extraordinary affairs can a man fall through his giddiness! The ranks of the jesters are full in our town, without the addition of Deacon Akhílla, yet he is unable to refrain from augmenting their number with his person. The Prefect was bargaining with his father-in-law, the Prince's manager, Glitch, for a horse to complete his six-in-hand, and the latter did not care to sell, and they disputed as to whether the Prefect would get that horse, and made a bet on it. The Prefect made a bargain with the vagrant burgher Danílka, nicknamed "the Commissioner," that for two rubles he should steal the horse from Mr. Glitch. It's a perfectly proper thing, you see, for a chief of police to send a man to commit burglary, even if it is only for amusement! But the most proper thing of all was, that my Akhílla expressed his readiness to aid Danílka in that affair. Chanter-Sergyéi reported this matter to me, and I seized Akhílla in time, and placed him for the day under the surveillance of Natálya Nikoláevna, with whom my deacon spent the time by shaking some cream-butter for her in a carafe,¹ and at night, I put him on my floor, and in order to prevent his getting away, I locked up his shoes and all his clothing until morning. But this morning we were all awakened by a noise and an alarm: the Prefect's three-horse cart galloped straight up to my front door, and in it sat Commissioner Danílka between two peasants, shrieking like a madman. We went out to inquire what was the matter, what made him shriek so, and found that Danílka had been relieved of his clothing, which had been stuffed with stinging nettles. It appeared that Mr. Glitch had captured him, set him down in the nettles, and his servants had brought the bold young man back to those who had sent him. I pointed out to the deacon

¹ "Cream-Butter," in Russia, means butter obtained by shaking cream in a bottle until it forms. "Finnish butter" is the name for fresh butter bought in the shops. TRANSLATOR.

that if he had shared the same fate as Danílka, and had come back all covered with nettles, would not that have been pleasant for him? But he replied, that he would not have submitted—that even if ten men had attacked him, he would not have submitted.—“Well,” I said “and what if there had been twenty?”—“Well, one couldn’t do anything with twenty, —twenty would overpower you,” and thereupon he narrated how once, when he was in school, he and his brother were on their way home, simultaneously with a passing squad of soldiers, they espied a viburnum bush with a few bunches of berries, which are not good for much of anything, and made a rush to seize them,—Akhílla, and his brother, and the soldiers, about forty in number,—“and a big fight took place then and there between us, and they killed my brother Finogesha.” How artless and simple! What a story, and what an event! He doesn’t care a farthing for his life.”

September 29th, 1861. Varnáva, the son of Nikíta the church’s altar-bread baker, Márfa Nikoláevna Prepótensky, has arrived from the government capital. He has finished the seminary course among the best pupils, and has come hither to be the teacher of mathematics in the civilian school of the district. In reply to my question, why he did not wish to adopt the ecclesiastical profession, he said curtly, that he did not wish to be an impostor. I would not tolerate such a stupid reply, and told him he was a blockhead. Nevertheless, insignificant as I consider this man and all his opinions to be, yet I am stung by his answer, as by a poisonous wasp. Where is my project concerning the clergy, and the means of elevating them to their proper degree of dignity, so that every blockhead may not jeer at them, and the enemy of the fatherland may not rejoice thereat? Evidently, my wife spoke truly when she said, that “perhaps I had written it well, but had not signed well.” For some time past I have been meeting with frequent references to a book entitled “Concerning the Country Clergy,” and wishing to order it, I did so, but the book-seller replied from Moscow, that the book “Concerning the Country Clergy” was prohibited, and

not on sale. Here is, in truth, an idea of genius, on the part of some one, for us clergy: a book about the clergy is prohibited, and yet divers sorts of "nihilists" as they are called, read it and quote it!—Now, isn't that a downright insult to common sense!

November 22nd. I have been to the government capital, in my course. I was the celebrant at two pontifical services, and on both occasions stood below Father Troádiy, and that Troádiy, until he became a monk, was regarded among us as something very small indeed, and was called "the sorryhead," but, on the other hand, in his capacity of censor, and, probably, of guardian of Orthodoxy and defender of morals, he had that curious book "Concerning the Country Clergy." O, how much truth! how much bitter, but absolutely necessary truth! It strikes me that Father Troádiy cannot read all that is written here with approbation and satisfaction.

December 14th. At the early mass, the altar-bread baker's son, Varnávka Prepótsky, came to me in the sanctuary, and requested me to celebrate a requiem service, handing me, at the same time, a list of names, to which I attributed no special importance, and so did not look at it, and only marvelled inwardly at his devoutness; my amazement increased, when, on coming forth for the requiem service, I beheld there also our fashionable Madame Biziúkhin, and all our exiled Poles. And this puzzle did not remain a puzzle long, for as soon as Akhílla began to read from the list—Pavel, Alexander, Kondrátiy . . . I understood the whole thing instantly. . . . A very pretty trick they have played on me! It turns out that I have celebrated a requiem service for the Decembrists, for today is the anniversary of the uprising. I shall be wiser in the future, for although I may and ought to pray for all men, yet I do not consent to be made a fool of twice by fools. I did not let my staff perceive that anything was wrong, and they understood nothing of the matter.

December 27th. Akhílla really does sometimes display so much levity, that it is impossible, for his own good, to

forgive him. That poor old man, Konstantín Pízonsky, whom I have repeatedly mentioned, asked the deacon to teach the lad whom he has looked after and reared some splendid poetical congratulation for the mayor of the town, but Akhílla, who willingly undertook this commission, beat into the poor child's head the following:

Christ the Lord was born today,
Which made Tzar Herod very mad:
I wish you luck, and shall be glad
If it happens with you the same.

Yes; one must be extremely severe with him!

January 1st, 1862. The doctor, in the execution of his official duty, performed an autopsy on the body of a man who died suddenly, and school-master Varnávka Prepóten-sky brought several pupils from the district school to the autopsy, in order to show them the anatomy, and then, in class, he said to them: "Did you see the corpse?" They answered, "Yes."—"And did you see the bones?"—"Yes," they answered, "we saw the bones," "And did you see everything?"—"Yes, we saw everything," they replied—"But you didn't see a soul?"—"No, we didn't see a soul."—"Well, then, where is it?" And he settled the question for them by telling them that there is no soul. I directed the supervisor's attention to this, confidentially, and said that I should not neglect to mention it when the director made his inspection.

Here, now, priest, this is where you are needed. You have warred with the Schismatics,—and accomplished nothing; you have warred with the Poles,—and accomplished nothing: now conquer this folly, for this is the fruit of your own loins. Will you conquer? . . . Tell your fortune on your fingers.

January 9th. I am sick with quinsy, and cannot go out of the house, and Father Zakháriya is giving the lessons in the school in my place. Today he returned greatly disconcerted and confused, and with tears refused to give the lessons in my place, and the reason is this. The last lesson Father Zakháriya gave in the third class was about Providence, and

he explained this, and today he began to review what he had taught; but one pupil, the son of Lyálin the grocer, a very intelligent lad, Aliósha, suddenly answered that he "only admitted God the Creator, but did not recognize God the Providence." Astonished at such an answer, Father Zakháriya inquired upon what the youthful theologian based his conclusion, and the latter replied—on the fact that there is a great deal of injustice and cruelty in Nature, and as his first illustration, mentioned death, which, he said, was unrighteously sent upon all men because of the sin and fall of one man. Father Zakháriya, being forced not to let this impertinent reply pass unnoticed, began to explain to the pupils, that we, owing to the imperfection of our intelligence, are very poor judges of all this, and reinforced his words with the remark, that if we were eternal in our sins, then sin would be eternal, all vicious and wicked beings would be eternal, but for their better comprehension, he added, that even the bloodthirsty tiger, and the fierce shark would be eternal, and thereby he sufficiently convinced them all. But at the second hour, when Father Zakháriya was in the lower class, that same urchin entered, and there, in the presence of the very little boys, he controverted Father Zakháriya, by saying: "But what could the bloodthirsty tiger and the fierce shark do to us, if we were immortal?" Father Zakháriya, thanks to his kindliness and his lack of presence of mind, found nothing to say, except, "well, that is a subject which must be discussed by wiser people, than you and I." But this affected the old man to such a degree, that he wept for a good hour at my house; and, I, by the contrariness of things, am still ill, and cannot go out to threaten this dissoluteness, in which I suspect school-master Varnáva of having a hand.

January 13th. What a good guesser I am! Aliósha Lyálin, when flogged by his father for his free-thinking remarks declared, as he wept under the rods, that teacher Prepótsky had taught him that question and the reply which followed. I am frightfully angry; but our doctor says that I cannot go out, for I shall have a relapse of angina, and then I shall

go the way *ad patres*, and I would not like to do that just yet. I have written a note to the superintendent, and have received a reply, that Prepótensky, in response to my demand, has been reprimanded. Yes, reprimanded! for corrupting the minds of *these little ones*, for leading them astray, for insulting that most honourable, gentle, and, I may say, exemplary servitor of the altar—reprimanded: and because a starving chanter exchanged an old Psalter for a new one, he condemned his whole family to a year without bread. . . . O perverse generation!

January 13th. The reprimand, of course, merely encouraged Prepótensky, and he has fairly pecked my Father Zakháriya to death. That stupid but spiteful good-for-nothing taught Aliósha Lyálin, who was embittered by his flogging, to inquire of Father Zakháriya “is it true that a drunken man is a beast?”—“Yes, he is a beast,” replied Father Zakháriya, unsuspiciously.—“Then where is his soul all that time, for you said that a beast has no soul?” Father Zakháriya was disconcerted, and said in reply only: “Well, just wait, and I’ll tell your father about this; he will thrash you again.” For the Lord God’s sake, tell me whether it is not becoming a serious question—what is to be done with that new enemy, Varnáva, the son of the altar-bread baker, and teacher of abominations?

January 19th. The old grocer Lyálin has again flogged his son with the rods, and has taken him out of school altogether, and put him in the shop, saying, “that’s no school but the worst sort of depravity.” I detest my intolerable quinsy, which at these moments has closed my throat. This success of Varnáva is a lively example of what one scabby sheep may effect if once it is admitted to the flock! And here, too, is a lesson to the point, that a musician may not possess much sobriety, but skill he must possess. The first example is furnished by Prepótensky—the second by my Father Zakháriya. Children are being taken out of school because of the propagator of enlightenment, Prepótensky, while Father Zakháriya, in spite of all his purity of soul can-

not reply to anything. At such times my ears want to spring up higher than my brow! And now do you realize, you intelligent citizen, that I do not eat the bread of idleness, and am not an imposter? Do you realize that? And if you do, do you also realize that I am feeble, and old, and have grown stupid with all those "silences". . . . And what is growing up to take my place? Think of that, my brother, think of that, my friend and neighbour, for a viperous enemy is already risen up among us, and that enemy is flesh of our flesh. At present he is stupid and crack-brained, and is going about in Varnáva's skin, but the old priest, taught by experience, says to you: Stand on your guard, and keep a keen watch, to see what disguise he will assume next. Where now are Tchemernítzky, and that manager of mine? What plans have they on hand now? How much wiser have they grown since the days when they chattered in the temple and sang on the porch "is it too much," instead of "Many Years"? Go and catch them now! Move on . . . they will catch you!

January 21st. You say a word to yourself in private, and it returns to discomfit you. Before the ink was properly dried wherewith I wrote, "catch them, or they will catch you," I suddenly found myself caught. Today the prefect Porókhontzeff came to me, and brought a copy of an official document from St. Petersburg. Therein it was stated that it had come to the knowledge of the highest authorities that the newspaper the "Kólokol" and other secret works were widely disseminated in our parts, and therefore it was imposed upon him as his duty to prosecute vigorously the dissemination of these things; and the signature was that of our "Tchemernítzky!" What do you think of that!

January 27th. I am frightfully upset. There's no getting the better of that odious Varnáva Prepótsky. He told the children in a lesson that Jonah could not have been in the whale's belly, because that beast, the whale, while very huge itself, has a very small throat. Decidedly, I cannot bear this, but I am afraid to report him to the director, lest

on this occasion also he may confine himself to a very slight reprimand.

February 2nd. Postmaster Timofeí Ivánovitch, on unsealing a letter, found a description of the Tugánoff affair, written down by the prefect for Tchemernítzky, and they all had a good laugh over it. Why do they do this, why do they chatter after they have opened letters, thereby annulling all the importance of that operation, and the correspondence for a revolutionist by a police-official? The chief of police gave a hint that he indulges in literature for the "Kólokol." Would it not be more dignified if there were nothing of all this on either side?

February 14th. I am still ill, and do not go out of the house. I have read a book-supplement of a journal, where, in one novel, the author introduces a priest. It is narrated how he comes to a village, and how he strives to be good and honourable; but he encounters hourly obstacles. Although all this is described superficially, and without fundamental knowledge of our position, still I am delighted that such an idea should have occurred to the author. The hour has come when worldly people must look at us, and when, we, in our turn, must penetrate their ideas and their aims. How absurd our Deacon Akhílla is! Perceiving that I find my illness tedious, and being desirous of diverting me, he brought to me Pízonky's little dog, a mongrel, poodle, which, when Akhílla says: "Laugh, doggie!" displays its teeth, and actually does appear to laugh. Then again, the big deacon squats down on his heels in front of it, and repeats: "Laugh, doggie!" and again it grins. How childishly close to Nature is this Akhílla, and how everything about Nature interests him!"

February 17th. Prepótensky has finally exhausted my patience. I can no longer regard him as a man, after what he has done, and I have written about his deeds not to his director, but to Marshal of the Nobility Tugánoff. What will come of it with that old Voltairian I know not—but at all events, he is not a hireling but a man of this land, and he

will take pity on it. Varnávka does things which can be prompted by nothing less than madness. Owing to the illness of teacher Gonórsky, Prepótsensky was temporarily entrusted with the history lessons, and he immediately began to hold forth on the immorality of war, and applied this directly to the happenings in Poland. But as though this were not enough for him, and he ridiculed civilization, censured patriotism, and the principle of nationality, furthermore he made fun of decency to the children, representing it even as, in many respects, immoral; and he cited as an example of this, that cultivated peoples conceal the begetting of a man, but do not conceal the act of murder, and even carry the weapons of war on their shoulders. This is trivial: but then, I see only trivial things because I am placed in trivial circumstances.

February 28th. Oho! My Voltairian does not jest. The director came. I could not endure it, and although the doctor declared it was dangerous for me, I went out and talked to him about the breaches of decency, on the part of Prepótsensky, but the director laughed very heartily over it all. What is there laughable about it! He turned the whole thing into a jest, and said that Moscow would not be set on fire with it, "and, moreover," he added, "where do you expect me to get any one else? They're all like that nowadays." So I was made to appear a ridiculous fool, a useless busybody. Evidently, that is as it should be.

March 1st. Of a truth, I really have become an old idiot, and everybody is making merry at my expense. The doctor and the chief of police came to see me today and I told them that my health had not suffered in the least from my going out yesterday; and thereupon they burst out laughing, and replied, that the doctor had kept me in quarantine as a joke, because he had made a bet with some one or other, that if he took a fancy, I would sit in the house for a month. With that object, he had threatened me with a danger which did not exist. Fie!

May 14th. Prepótsensky has grown so daring that he makes

very little change in his behaviour even in my presence. Having procured from some one of the Schismatics a widely-circulated little book with illustrations, where Antichrist is represented as a Bishop in vestments of the present day, he explained that Christ was a socialist, and we, the priests and bishops, since we oppose socialism, are Antichrists.

June 20th. I have recovered splendidly, through making my trip as Ecclesiastical Superintendent. Everything is so fresh and beautiful in nature, and peace and satisfaction were discernible among the people. In Blagoúkhovo the peasants have repaired and re-decorated the church at their own expense, but here again, even in such a peaceful matter, something of a sportive tendency has cropped up. On the wall of the vestibule they have depicted an aged man reclining on a couch, and underneath they have placed the inscription: "On the seventh day the Lord rested from all his labours." I reprimanded Yákov for this, and ordered that the picture should be painted out.

July 11th. The day before yesterday the Bishop celebrated service in our cathedral, as he was passing through. I asked Father Troády: whether the picture in question at Blagoúkhovo had been erased? and learned, that the picture is still in existence, at which I was about to get excited, when Father Troády soothed me by saying that it was nothing, and said, jestingly, that "it was in the popular taste," and he also added a certain anecdote about a soul in shoes, and again everything ended in the most playful fashion. Ekho! how jolly they find everything.

July 20th. I have been to Blagoúkhovo, and ordered that picture scraped off in my presence: I do not regard it as necessary to uphold the stupid popular spirit. I found out about the artist; it turns out that it was sexton Pável, who was exercising his talent. Placing myself in harmony with the jesting spirit of the times, I ordered that artist to seat himself on the box with my coachman, and having carried him forty versts, I dropped him in the road to trudge back

on foot, so that he might have leisure during that stroll to reflect upon his artistic fantasy.

August 12th. Deacon Akhilla has been humming constantly for a good while past. I recently found out that he had joined a Polish choir, and is singing the bass with Kalyársky, in Polish songs. I gave him my word of honour, that I would report him to the Bishop; but I forgave him, because I see that he did it through his usual heedlessness.

October 12th. The new Governor has been here on a tour of inspection. He went into the cathedral and the school, and in both places—both the school and the cathedral—he insisted on my bestowing my blessing on him. He is a Russian, both in manners and in name. He is still very young, was reared in that special law-school, and has never been outside of St. Petersburg before, which is immediately evident, because everything interests him. He inquired with particular curiosity into the character of the clash between the clergy and the power of the Marshal of Nobility; but, unfortunately, I was not able to satisfy his curiosity, because our Marshals—both of the district, Plodomásoff, and of the government, Tugánoff—are worthy men, and there is no clashing. He said that he did not intend to attach any importance to the agitation of the Poles, and expressed himself to the effect, that they must “simply be ignored,” as though they did not exist, “for all this,” he added, “must disappear; the mass of the populace will swallow them up, and not a trace of them will be left.” Thereupon, not without eloquence, he pointed out, that one must not take everything literally, “for” (his words), “all that sort of thing merely fans the flame of discord, and diverts government officials from their principal business.” Thereupon, developing his thought in the spirit of the loftiest policy, probably, he began to talk about national fanaticism and intolerance.

November 14th. They say that a certain landed proprietor has been to the Governor, to complain of the peasants not fulfilling their obligations; the Governor, stopping the flood

of his complaints, said: "I beg you to remember, when you speak of the people, that I am a democrat."

January 20th, 1863. I record herewith the noteworthy and edifying *history of the substitutes*. The following curious tale is told of the first meeting of this new Governor with our Marshal of Nobility, Tugánoff. This Petersburg fop also announced himself to our Voltaire as a democrat, for which Tugánoff praised him in the presence of every one at a ball in the Assembly of the Nobility, adding, that that was a very fine way of thinking, particularly appropriate to the present time, since there was a good-sized famine in three of our counties, and a wide field of activity for the lover of the people was thus thrown open. The Governor was greatly delighted at this,—that there was a famine—, but was incensed because he had not been informed about it before, and calling his director, he gave him a severe scolding for not having told him earlier about it, and, in addition, like a genuine hustler, he gave orders that it should immediately be reported in St. Petersburg. But the director, in justification of his fault, said that the famine noticeable in those counties was not, so far, a genuine famine: for although the rye had proved a failure, on the other hand, the "*millet* had borne very well." That was the beginning of the story. "What is *millet*?" exclaimed the Governor.—"Millet is a substitute for rye," replied the learned director, instead of simply saying that porridge is made from millet, which, possibly, might have satisfied our lawyer, for he must be a master-hand at cooking porridge.¹ However, it happened that the word "substitute" was mentioned to him. "Shame on you," said that lofty statesman, when he heard the word; "shame on you for deceiving me, when all you have to do is to go into any fruit-shop in order to find out what millet is used for: grapes are transported in millet!" Tugánoff remained serious, and held his peace, but the next day he sent to the Governor from the commission of alimentation a list of the grain-seeds in Russia. The Governor was overwhelmed with confusion, when he read millet

¹ To "cook porridge" means to make a horrible mess. TRANSLATOR.

there, and summoning his director, he said: "Pardon me for not believing you then, you were right,—millet is grain." I am most sincerely sorry for you, my dear democrat! Although the German assumed that St. Nicholas dealt in oats, he didn't make a grape-farmer of him.

December 6th. Reports are constantly arriving about hostile encounters between Marshal of Nobility Tugánoff and the Governor, who, they say, is trying to find an opportunity to deal the Marshal a slap because of his "millet," and, at last, it appears that they have run foul of each other. The Governor is always standing up for the peasants, and the other, that Voltaire, stands up for his rights and his liberties. Jurisprudence has so warped the mind of the former, that he must wish he could forget what he has learned,—his descent dates from Mt. Ararat, and he cherishes no respect for any laws whatever. There will be a battle between them.

December 20th. The seminary students have come home for the Christmas holidays, and Father Zakháriya's son, who gives private lessons in good houses, has brought a wholly incredible and dreadful piece of news: a retired soldier, having concealed himself in a corner of the Church of the Intercession of the Virgin, removed the halo from the holy image of John the Warrior, and on being captured with the halo in his house, he explained that he had not stolen it, but that, complaining about the precariousness of a Russian warrior's existence, he had prayed to that military saint to help him in his poverty, and the saint,—had granted his prayer, he declared, and had said: "I will punish them for this in the next world, but in the meantime, there is something for you": with these sympathetic words, he had removed the precious halo from his head with his own hand, saying: "take this." Such an explanation hardly seems worthy of any attention whatever, does it? But a different view has been taken of it, and the Governor has raised the question with the Consistory; as to whether such a miracle can have taken place. As a matter of course, the Consistory finds itself in an embarrassing position, for it cannot reply that a miracle is impossible. But what is this leading

up to? Marshal of Nobility Turgánoff, on this occasion, protested secretly, and wrote that he regarded this action as preposterous, and undertaken solely for the purpose of undermining faith, and making the clergy a subject of ridicule. Thus this old unbeliever is upholding the clergy, and that lawyer, who is bound to defend them, is making merry over them. Yes, it appears that the hour is coming, and even now is, when common sense will not be capable of perceiving the slightest strangeness in anything that takes place. There is no cause of rejoicing over that support on the part of Tugánoff, since it does not spring from zeal for the faith, but from enmity towards the Governor, although, in appearance it is of advantage in the present instance, for what good is to be expected, if all the people in the empire begin to ridicule each other, forgetting that they have taken the oath of allegiance to one crown, and serve one fatherland? It is not well, sir!

January 9th, 1864. Tugánoff himself has come to Plodomásovo, for some reason or other. I could not restrain my impatience, and went yesterday to see him, and to find out about his fight, and his protest in regard to John the Warrior. Wonderful! That Tugánoff, who used to read Voltaire, talked with me sorrowfully, and in the most friendly tone possible. He does not regard his protest as sufficiently vigorous yet, for he said: "what I myself, personally, think about all miracles will remain a private matter, for my own use, but I cannot share the desire of the miscreants to deprive the people of the only thing which, so far, implants in them the habit of thinking that they belong, just a little, to a higher sphere of existence, than their striped pigs and cows." What aridity these words contain—but I made no reply. . . . What is to be done! O God! Help Thou *this unbelief*, otherwise there is danger that we shall arrive at the state of a nomadic horde, of devouring roots, and neighing like horses.

May 20th. There is a fresh success in the line of buffoonery to record: because of a pernicious epidemic which has spread over the government, attacking animals and people, a sugges-

tion to the clergy has been printed in the government newspaper—to the effect that they are to exhort their parishioners “that the peasants should be on their guard against the quack healing of sorcerers and wise women, which not infrequently ruins the health permanently, and that they should apply, at once, for aid to the local physicians and veterinary surgeons.” But where are those “local physicians and veterinary surgeons” of ours? I involuntarily recall a little old book which I read long ago, by an English writer, the witty Pastor Sterne, entitled: “The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy,” and I draw the conclusion that now that licensed nihilism is at an end with us, the day of *Shandyism* is beginning, for neither the one nor the other is a doctrine, but a special state of mind which, according to Sterne’s definition, “dissolves the heart and lungs, and turns the wheel of life very fast.” And what still further convinces me that Russia has entered upon the phase of Shandyism, is what that Shandy says: “if I, like Sancho Panza, were allowed to choose a kingdom for myself, I would not choose either a commercial or a wealthy one, but one where people were incessantly laughing, both in jest and in earnest.” Really, I fear that patch-work Panza was aiming at us poor wretches, for everything exactly fits us, and we are neither wealthy nor commercial but we are far too much given to laughter!

May 21st. Landed proprietor Plodomássoff has returned from the capital, and has brought me, and Father Zakháriya, and deacon Akhílla very valuable walking-sticks of natural reeds, and has shown us a small glass lamp, with a burning fluid, kerosene or mineral oil, which is obtained from naphtha.

June 9th. I have permitted myself a shameful degree of meanness over those walking-sticks of which I have written above, and my whole past life has been turned upside down like a sieve, and has covered me. I am sitting beneath that sieve like a rook that has been plucked of its feathers, which naughty children have seized to amuse themselves with. Here, of a truth, is the saddest side of life’s increasing shallowness: I have become shallower, and shallower, in every

way, until I have reached such a degree of shallowness that I am not even able to confide my vanity to dumb paper; and I will merely say, in brief: I was perturbed because walking-sticks exactly alike were given to me and to Father Zakhárya, and one almost identical to Deacon Akhílla. O God! did I use to be capable of taking offence over a wretched walking-stick, or, what is still worse, of employing craft to create a distinction in it? No, I did not use to be like that, such trifles did not formerly upset me, but I was engrossed in lofty thoughts about perfecting myself in this earthly vale, of beholding the light that knoweth no setting, and of restoring with usury the talent which had been committed to me by the Lord."

Here ended Tuberózoff's old diary, after having perused which the old man took his pen, wrote a new date, and began calmly and sternly to set forth the matter on a fresh page: "I recorded, at the time it happened, how school-teacher Varnáva Prepótensky, the son of Nikíta, the altar-bread baker, disturbed the innocent children over a corpse, about the human soul, declaring that there was no soul, because no lair for it was visible in the body. My wrath against that frivolous but harmful man was judged superfluous, at the time, by intelligent people, and it was thought that the cause itself which had given rise to my wrath was unworthy of attention. Now something more has happened: when there was a sudden rise in the river recently, the dead body of an unknown man was washed down from somewhere upstream and landed on the town shore. Today Varnávka's mother, the poor altar-bread baker, told me, with tears in her eyes, that the doctor and the prefect, probably out of malevolence towards her son, or by way of deriding him, had made him a present of that drowned man, and he, Varnávka, in his stupidity having accepted the gift, had boiled the corpse in the earthen pot in which, hitherto, she has peacefully bleached her clothes in lye, and had poured out the contents under the porter appletree, but had collected the bones and carried them to the government capital, and consequently she was afraid that her precious son would be arrested as a murderer, with the bones of that man. I soothed her to the best

of my ability, but demanded an explanation from the prefect: "why had the corpse of the drowned man, which should have received church burial after the autopsy, been given by him to schoolmaster Varnávka?" And I was told, in reply, that he had done it "in the interest of enlightenment," that is to say, in order that that Varnávka might instruct himself in natural sciences over the skeleton. This zeal for science is most absurd on the part of people who are so far removed from it as prefect Porókhontzeff, who has spent half his life in a cavalry stable, where they learn how to bind up a horse's tail, or of that lying doctor, who belongs to the science whose members regard themselves as learned merely because of their thorough ignorance, and as a proof of his crass stupidity the fact may serve that having drunk by mistake, at Plodomásóff's, a glass of illuminating kerosene, instead of vódka, he declared that his belly shone for a whole week. But, however that may have been, the drowned man whom Varnávka boiled, has been converted into a skeleton. Varnávka carried off the bones to the government capital, to the assistant-surgeon at the almshouse. That person, who is skilled in anatomy, fastened all the bones together, and made a skeleton, which has been brought into this town, and is now at the house of Prepótensky, who has hung it up at his window, so that it is directly opposite the sanctuary of the church of St. Nikíta. There it stands, serving as a permanent attraction for collecting a crowd on the street, and of wrangling, and discord among Varnávka's household, with his simple-minded mother. This dead man has begun to avenge himself. Every night he appears to the unhappy mother of this learned person in her dreams, and troubles the repose of the old woman, insistently demanding of her that he shall receive burial. The poor and thoroughly miserable woman has prayed, and wept, and besought her son upon her knees that he will give her that skeleton for burial, and, naturally, has met with the most decided refusal. Then she settled upon a rather desperate measure, and during her son's absence, she collected the bones in a small wooden box, carried them into the garden, and with her own aged hands she in-

tered the bones under the same porter appletree under which Varnávka had poured out the boiled body of the unhappy man. But all this turned out a failure, for her learned son dug them up again and a new performance with those bones, began, which is not ended up to the present time. What has happened is both laughable and disgraceful! They kept stealing these bones from each other, until my deacon Akhílla undertook to put an end to the whole matter, and proceeded so promptly to the execution of his resolution, that I had no possibility whatever of holding him back and bringing him to his senses; and now I am worried by a sort of foreboding that some stupid act which may injure sensible folks may be the result of this trivial affair. And, moreover, I have been frightfully upset by my conversation with the prefect, and the doctor, who have upbraided me with my *jealous intolerance of unbelief* (as they express it), while it strikes them that no one cherishes any faith any longer, not even excepting, say they, those who officially defend it. I believe! According to my faith I believe, and even have no doubt, but merely wonder whence have arisen among us that exasperated enmity and hatred towards faith? Does this proceed from the striving towards freedom? But to whom is faith any hindrance in all sorts of success in the search for freedom? Why have not the real thinkers thought thus?"

Father Savély heaved a deep sigh, laid aside his pen, cast one more look at his diary and, as it were, with one general all-including glance took in all those whom he had recorded, all his life, in this not impartial list, then closed his jeans-bound book, and locked it away in its old resting-place. Then he walked to the window, raised the calico shade, and gazing across the river, he drew himself up to his full height, and crossed himself in thanksgiving. The sky was covered with black clouds, and occasional drops of rain were already pattering down upon the thick dust; this was the rain which Tuberózoff had asked for and prayed for on the preceding day, at the communal prayer-service, and in its present appearance the old man beheld a sign, as it were, that his prayer

was not ineffectual. Old Tuberózoff whispered words of rapturous praise, and did not notice that the tears were flowing gently down his cheeks, and the drops of rain grew more and more frequent, and at last sprinkled down as though through a fine sieve, refreshing with their moist coolness the slightly fevered head of the archpriest, who fell asleep as he sat by the window, with his head bowed upon his two white hands.

In the meantime, the quiet rain, unaccompanied by thunder, discharged itself, the air became pure and fresh, the sky cleared, and in the East the grey gloom began to grow silvery, preparing a place for the dawn of the day consecrated to our father in the Saints, Methódy of Pesnóshsk,—the day, as we may recall, to which deacon Akhílla attributed such great significance, that he even commanded the gentle archpriestess to write it down as a day to be everlastingly remembered.

CHAPTER VI

THE dawn grew rapidly brighter, and while the sun was still floating in the mists behind the hazy pine forest, the golden darts of its rays were already sharply projected on the horizon. A light fog moved restlessly over the river, and crept upward along the rocky shore; under the bridge it clustered in clumps, and clung around the wet, black piles. From beneath this fog the melon-patch gleamed blue, and the white ribbon of the highway was visible. Over everything lay the shadows of twilight, and nowhere, either inside the houses, nor on the squares and the streets, were any signs of awaking perceptible.

But lo! on the very crest of the steep, hilly side of Stáry Górod, upon the crosspath which runs down the folds of the rocky ravine to the river, the contours of a very strange group are delicately and transparently outlined.

Seen in the dim light under which this group presents itself, there is something fantastic about it. In the centre of it stands a man covered with a long tunic which falls from his shoulders to the ground, and is slightly caught in at the waist-line. This figure has made its appearance quite unnoticed, as though it had floated up out of the thinning fog, and it stands as immovable as a wraith.

A superstitious man might think that this was the house-demon of Stáry Górod, who had come to sigh over the town for an hour before its awakening.

But the dawn, which is growing brighter and brighter every moment, permits us to see more distinctly, that this is not the house-demon, nor any other spirit, although, at the same time, and notwithstanding, it is something rather out of the ordinary. Now we perceive that this figure has its hands thrust into its

pockets. From one pocket projects a very long rod, with a string, or, at any rate, a fishing-line fastened to its end; out of the other, suspended by four cords, hangs something resembling a heavy *pálitza*.¹ But now a light breeze has begun to stir, little ripples have begun to gleam quietly on the sleepy river, the leaves of the birches behind the fancifully-patterned gate of the cathedral have begun to rustle, and the empty folds of the ample draperies of the statue on the hill are gently moved aside, and thin legs clad in white night-drawers are disclosed to view. At the self-same second when these thin legs were laid bare, there were suddenly thrust forth from behind them four hands belonging to two other figures, concealed in the background of the picture. These officious hands seized the inflated skirts, gathered them up, and again enveloped with them the thin legs of the idol. Now it was only necessary to look attentively, and one was able to discern the two remaining figures. On the right, a woman was visible. She attracted attention first of all by the enormous inflation of her lower body, upon which a narrow tunic rose aloft. In this woman's hands was a gleaming copper shield, in the centre of which was fastened a large tuft of hair, as though it had just been taken from the skull along with the skin. On the other side, to wit, on the left of the tall figure, there stood forth a broad-bearded, very thick-set black savage. Under his left arm was something which resembled an implement of torture, while in his right he held a bloody sack, from which hung down two human heads, pale, devoid of hair, and, probably, they had yielded up their last sigh under torture. Around these three persons breathed the genuine atmosphere of a northern saga. But now it is light, the brilliant sun has risen a little higher, and the mysterious saga is as though it had never existed. It is simply three living, though decidedly original human beings. They stood still for a minute, and then moved on downward. After descending for another ten

¹This is an ecclesiastical mark of distinction—a diamond-shaped piece of brocade (symbolizing the sword of the spirit), which the priestly possessor wears suspended on his right hip. TRANSLATOR.

paces, they again came to a halt, and the one who was taller than the others and stood in front of them, said softly: "Look, brother Komár, they don't seem to be visible today, for some reason!"

"No, they aren't," replied black-bearded Komár.

"Suppose you try to see them."

Komár stared across the river, and a second later he again ejaculated: "There's no use looking; nobody is to be seen."

"And, O Lord, how quiet it is in the town!"

"The kingdom of sleep," quietly remarked the figure which held the copper shield under its arm.

"What's that you say, Félicie?" inquired the thin figure, which had not caught her words.

"I tell you, Vóin Vasílievitch, that it's the kingdom of sleep in the town," replied the woman.

"Yes, the kingdom of sleep, but people will soon begin to wake up. Just take a look, Komár, it strikes me that I saw something plunge into the water over yonder." The figure nodded towards the left, in the direction of an island, from which the mist was rising, and quietly clustering under the bridge.

"Something did splash," replied Komár, and began to watch two thin circles, which were spreading out over the quiet water. In the centre of the forward one of these circles, rocking gently, wheeled something in the nature of a ripe, yellow pumpkin.

"Ah, the rascal, he has dived in before us again, without waiting for his superiors."

"And yonder that one is ready to," remarked Komár dispassionately.

"It can't be! You are mistaken, Komáristche!"

"Yonder he is! Look, yonder he goes by the river!"

All three wayfarers laid their palms to their brows, and, gazing across the river, saw something tall and stout emerge therefrom, wrapped from head to foot in a white shroud: that "something" was very strongly suggestive of the statue

of the Commander, and like that statue, it moved smoothly and slowly, but steadily approached nearer to the river.

During these minutes, resplendent Phoebus was rolling ever higher in the heavens on his fiery chariot; the mist had, by now, become quite thin, and was all permeated, as it were, with an amber hue. The picture was glowing with crimson and azure, and in this brilliant, powerful illumination, all flooded with the rays of the sun, upon the waves of the river there came into view a naked, gigantic hero, with an unruly mane of black hair on his huge head. He was swimming against the current, seated upon a powerful bay horse, a fit mate for him, which was vigorously cleaving the waves with his broad chest, and angrily neighing with his dark-red nostrils.

All these pedestrians and the swimming horseman were making, from different directions, to one point, which, if intersecting lines were drawn to it would prove it to be, without fail, a large rock rising up in the middle of the river. In the first figure which is descending from the cliff, we recognize the prefect of Stáry Górod, Vóin Vasílievitch Porókhontzeff, the retired cavalry captain, a long, thin easy-going soul, who had given permission, in the interests of science, to Varnáva Prepótensky, to utilize the corpse of the drowned man. This long, dry Mæcenás wore a dark-red silk dressing-gown, and on his head was a pointed worsted cap; from one of his pockets, where reposed his right hand, projected a thin whipstock, with a long lash tied to it, and beside the other, into which the prefect's left hand was thrust, stuck out a huge meerschaum pipe, which had been smoked until it was black, and an oriental morocco tobacco-pouch with a hunting strap.

Behind him, on the left, was quietly marching his head coachman, Komár, his master's friend and confidant, who had long since lost his Christian name, and was called by every one Komár—the Musquito. Komár was not, in the least, carrying implements of torture, nor two human heads, nor a sack of crash stained with blood, but was simply bearing

under his arm a small bench, an old, dark-red rug, and a pair of ox-bladders blown up very tight, and fastened together with a bit of cloth list.

The third individual, so menacing a quarter of an hour ago, with the copper shield under the arm, now stands before us in the very meek person of Komár's wife. "Mother Felisáta," as this person was called in the servants' hall, was loaded down with a pretty heavy burden, but no part of this burden was suitable for battle. First of all, she was carrying her stomach, which served as a shelter for a future little Komár; next, under her arm, she had a copper basin, which gleamed brilliantly in the sunlight, and in this basin was a wad of shredded linden-bast,¹ and in the bast a cloth mitten, and in the cloth mitten a piece of camphor soap; and on her head lay a white sheet, doubled in four.

A picture of the most tranquil nature.

The figure beneath the white covering which was approaching quietly on the further side of the river, also suddenly lost its grandeur, and along with it, all resemblance to the Commander. It was a man wearing boots made of the same skin as the boots which cover the feet of every other mortal who wears footgear. He was walking peaceably along, covered to the heels with a sheet, and when, on reaching the river, he flung it off upon the grass, he turned out to be, quite simply, the corpulent, and badly-built, white-browed and white-lashed district doctor, Pugóvkin.

In the curly-headed, naked cavalier on the brown, long-maned horse, we recognize Deacon Akhílla, and even the pumpkin, barely visible in the tiny ripples of the stream, assumes a familiar human face: in it are marked two gentle blue eyes, and a broken nose. It is clear that this is no pumpkin, but the bald head of Konstantín Pízonsky, whose aged body is concealed in the cool water.

As we look, the company of Stáry Górod bathers gathers at its appointed place, having long been accustomed to meet

¹This shredded bast, in appearance somewhat like excelsior, is used as a sponge. TRANSLATOR.

here in this manner every morning, as a rule, on fine summer days, and together enjoy a cool, matutinal bath. Let us watch the scene.

The white-tanned doctor was the first to fling aside his coat, and a minute later he removed also his second covering, his pink checkable-gingham shirt, and then, after taking a brief run, he flung himself headlong into the river, and swam to the large, broad stone, which rose one foot above the water in the very middle of the stream. This stone was, in reality, the central point of their assembly. The doctor traversed the space which separated him from the stone in a few strokes, and leaped out on the smooth upper surface of the stone, and bursting into a guffaw, shouted out:

"Again I am the first of all in the water!" and thereupon, the doctor roared at Akhilla: "Swim faster, Pharaoh!—Do you see him, the little devil?" he shouted to the prefect, again laughing merrily, and again, without waiting for an answer from the cavalry captain, he called to Pizonsky, beckoning to him gently as though to a duck: "Come on, baldy! come on, baldy!"

In the meantime, Feliwéta approached the commissioner of police, or commander of the district, who was not so agile, and was still on dry land; she ungirded him, and removing his dressing-gown, left him standing in nothing but his linen and a variegated flannel under-waistcoat.

Thus this warrior was still preparing for the bath, while the doctor, seated on the stone and dangling his feet in the water, was twisting about in all directions, and merrily whistling, and suddenly dealt Akhilla, who swam up to him, such a whack on the bare spine with his open palm, that the latter cried out, not at the blow, but at the tremendous sound.

"Why do you fight so noisily?" exclaimed the deacon.

"Don't grab me by the body," replied the doctor.

"But what if that is a habit of mine?"

"Drop it!" retorted the doctor, whistling loudly.

"I do, and then I forget."

The doctor made no reply, and continued to whistle, while

the deacon, shaking his head, spat aside, and untying the cord with which he was girt about his gigantic body, took from the cord a currycomb and a horse-brush, and began zealously and with practised hand, to wash the mane of his horse, which, confined only by his halter, arched his curving back out of the water, and turbulently churned the waves into foam with his knees.

This landscape and genre picture depicted the simplicity of life in Stáry Górod, as the overture depicts the music of the opera: but the overture is not yet finished.

CHAPTER VII

ON the left bank, where the slow-going prefect remained, coachman Komár spread out the rug, fixed upon it the little bench he had brought, rocked this to and fro, and having made sure that it stood firmly, he cried:

“Sit down, Vóin Vasílievitch, it’s steady!”

Porókhontzeff hastily approached the bench, shook it once more, with his own hand, and did not sit down until he had convinced himself that it actually did stand firmly. No sooner had his master seated himself, than Komár grasped him under the shoulders behind, and Komár’s wife, placing the basin with the wad of bast and the sheet on the rug, set to undressing the warlike prefect. First she took off his skull-cap, then his knitted underwaistcoat, then his slippers, and his socks; then she carefully laid her palms on the cavalry captain’s dry ribs, and halted, putting her head on one side as a sign of attention.

“Well, Félicie, I think it’s all right: I think I can go in?” inquired Porókhontzeff.

“No, Vóin Vasílievitch, your pulse is still beating hard,” replied Felisáta.

“Well, then I must wait, if it is beating; but do you dive in, Komár.”

“Yes, I’ll dive in.”

“Dive in, my good fellow, dive in! Take a little swim around, and then come out, and we will go in together.”

“If I should not happen to be on hand, Vóin Vasílievitch, it is very slippery, and you will not fall down again as you did the other day?”

“No, never mind; I shall not fall.”

Komár threw off his shirt behind his master’s back, and

diving into the water at the end of a run, worked his arms vigorously.

"Just see how wildly your little Komár is swimming!" remarked Porókhontzeff.

"Capitally," replied the wife, evidently not in the slightest degree embarrassed, nor causing any embarrassment by her presence to any of the bathers.

Felisáta, formerly one of Porókhontzeff's serf girls, had long been accustomed to act as nurse to her ailing master, and in her nursing of him there existed no difference of sex. In the meantime, Komár had swum around the stone on which the bathers were sitting, and leaping out again upon the shore, he stood with his back to the bench on which his master was sitting, and bent over in the shape of a letter L, turned upside down.

Vóin Vasílievitch mounted astride of him, clasped his arms around the man's neck, and went with him into the water. The ex-captain usually rode Komár into the water in this manner, because he could not walk barefooted on the fine jagged stones, but as soon as the water reached Komár's armpits, Komár halted, and announced that there were no more stones, and that he felt sand under foot. Then Vóin Vasílievitch slipped down from his shoulders, and laid himself on the bladders. And thus it was on this day also: the withered prefect lay down, Komár pushed him by the heels, and the two swam to the stone, and both climbed out upon it. This small stone, which projected above the surface of the water, in a level, circular table a couple of feet in diameter, now served as a resting-place for five men, four of whom—Porókhontzeff, Pizonsky, the doctor and Akhílla—had disposed themselves along the edges, while Komár stood between them, in the narrow square formed by their backs, and washed his master's head, while the rest chatted. Pizonsky, twitching his crooked nose, narrated how at twilight on the previous evening, a pair of swans had established themselves somewhere further down than the bridge, and had cackled all night in the rain.

"When swans cackle, that means an arrival for somebody," remarked Komár, as he continued assiduously to soap his master's head.

"No, it simply portends a fair day," replied Pízonksy pensively.

"Yes, and which of us could have any new arrival?" interposed the doctor: "we live like ghosts, and there's nothing new in a whole age."

"And what do we want of anything new?" replied Pízonksy. —"We have everything; the weather is fine, we sit here on this stone, and no one finds fault with us; we are naked, and no one frightens us. But if a new man arrives, everything will seem wrong to him, and he will go and pick things to pieces. . . ."

"He'll set to work to find out why you sit naked?" broke in Komár familiarly.

"He will ask: Why do they keep an official whom a woman washes?" interposed the doctor, in a low tone.

"That's true!" exclaimed the retired captain, wriggling in agitation on his seat. Komár blew into his moustache, smiled, and said softly:

"He will say: Why does that prefect ride horseback on Komár?"

"Hold your tongue, Komárishstche!"

"He will be curious, and ask questions about that also," spoke gentle Pízonksy again, and then he sighed, and added: "But now we sit here without novelties, as though we were in paradise; we are naked ourselves, and we behold beauty: we see the forest, we see the mountains, we see the temples, the water, the green; yonder are broods of ducklings quacking near the shore; yonder are little fishes playing in a regular school. 'Tis the power of the Lord!"

The sound of the last four words, which Pízonksy pronounced louder than the rest, pealed along the river, at first, then echoed once more from the slope of the hill, and, in conclusion, resounded somewhat more dully from the opposite shore. On hearing these echoes, Pízonksy raised his fore-

finger, stretched straight up into the air above his bald head, and said:

"Thrice doth the power of the Lord answer thee: what can be better than to dwell in such tranquillity, and end one's life in it?"

"That is the truth, the exact truth," replied the ex-captain with a sigh. "The doctor here and I have made a little news: we gave Varnáva the dead man to boil, and what a lot of nonsense has come of it! By the way, deacon, don't forget, my dear fellow, that you have sworn to take those bones away from Varnávka!"

"I shan't forget: I'm no aristocrat, that you should roar at me a hundred times; what I have promised, that I have done."

"What, you have done it? You haven't, really?"

"Of course I've done it."

"Deacon, you are lying, my dear man!"

Akhílla maintained silence.

"Why don't you speak? Come, tell us, how did you get the bones away from him? Hey? What the deuce do you mean by being so sedate today?"

"Why shouldn't I be sedate, when my figure permits me to do it?" retorted Akhílla not without pompousness.—"You and the doctor did a nasty thing, and I have remedied your stupidity: I crawled into Varnávka's little window, raked all those bones into a sack. . . ."

"And what next, dear little Akhílla? What next, my boy, what next?"

"Well, and then an absurd thing happened."

"Speak quickly, speak!"

"But what can I say, when I don't know myself, who it was stole those bones away from me again?"

Porókhontzeff sprang up and shouted:

"What, have they been stolen again."

"How can I tell you whether they have been stolen? I don't know whether they were stolen or not, only I brought them home, and shook them all out into a cart in the yard, that I might carry them off and bury them, and this morning

I looked—and again they weren't there, and nothing was left but the tail."

The doctor burst out laughing.

"What are you laughing at?" said the deacon, waxing rather angry with him.

"A tail was left with you?"

Akhílla was furious.

"Of course, a tail," he replied, "what do you call this?"

The deacon untied from the currycomb to which it was fastened, a small bone from a human ankle, and thrusting it at the doctor, he added drily: "just look at that, if you don't believe me."

"But do men have tails?"

"Well, don't they, sometimes?"

"So that means that you have a tail?"

"I?" questioned Akhílla in his turn.

"Yes, you."

Again the doctor burst into a roar of laughter, while the deacon turned pale and said:

"Hearken, father doctor, joke and joke away as much as you like, only you must know when to stop: remember that I'm an ecclesiastical person."

"Well, yes, that's all right! But just you tell me where your astragalus is." This unfamiliar word, "astragalus" produced upon the deacon an extraordinary impression: he thought there was something remarkably insulting in that Latin appellation of the ankle-bone, and shaking his head reproachfully at the doctor, he heaved a profound sigh, and said slowly:

"Well, I never expected that you were such a scoundrel!"

"I a scoundrel?"

"Why, of course, after your daring to ask me, an ecclesiastical person, such a stupid thing,—you are nothing but a scoundrel. And hearken to me: I forgave you a while ago when you were joking about the tail, but you had better look out."

"Horrible!"

"No, it's not horrible, but you had just better look out, really, for I'm tired of your present free-thinking, and I told Father Savély last night that he doesn't know how to manage, but if I once take hold, I'll choke out that free-thinking wickedness which has sprung up among us with one blow."

"But is it free-thinking to say astragalus?"

"Shut up!" shouted the deacon.

"What a fool," ejaculated the doctor, shrugging his shoulders.

"Shut up!" thundered Akhílla, raising his fist, and his eyes flashed menacingly.

"Phew, what an ass; there's no talking with him!"

"Ah, ah, so I'm an ass; there's no talking with me! Come now, brother, I won't let you off as easily as Savély did; come down into the pool!"

And with these words, the deacon, tossing his horse's halter to his left hand, with his right, seized the doctor around the body, and hurled himself with him into the water. They sank, rose to the surface and sank again. Although from the deacon's actions it was fair to conclude that he had no intention of drowning the doctor, but was only subjecting him to the torture of a ducking, and wrestling with him, as he dragged him lightly to the shore; still the three men who remained on the stone, and Felisáta, who was standing on the opposite bank, on hearing the despairing howls of the doctor, were so indescribably frightened that they raised a yell which could not fail to inspire universal alarm.

Thus did Deacon Akhílla begin his task of uprooting the pernicious free-thinking which had established itself in Stáry Górod, and we shall see what great consequences this energetic beginning brought in its train.

CHAPTER VIII

THE shouts and uproar raised by the bathers over this affair awoke the archpriest who was barely dozing at his window; the old man was startled, sprang to his feet, and casting a glance at the river, was still absolutely unable to understand anything about it, when a dandified tilbury drawn by a grey, thoroughbred horse came to a halt beneath his window. In the tilbury sat a young woman in a black gown: she was driving the horse herself, and by her side sat a small groom. She was a young widow, landed proprietress Alexandra Ivánovna Serbóloff, a former pupil of Tuberózoff, of whom he was very fond, and concerning whom he always expressed himself in the very warmest terms. On catching sight of the archpriest, the young woman made him a courteous bow, and greeted him in a friendly manner.

"Alexandra Ivánovna, accept the tribute of my most profound respect!" replied the archpriest. "It is always a joy to me to see you. My wife will be up directly, so permit me to invite you in for a cup of tea."

But the lady declined, and said that she was come for the purpose of praying for her deceased husband, and requested Tuberózoff to make haste to the church for her.

"I am at your service."

"Please: do you begin the mass, and I will run in for a minute to see old Mrs. Prepótsky, otherwise she will feel offended."

With these words the lady nodded her head, and her light equipage disappeared. Archpriest Savély hastily began to make his usual careful toilet, sent the small serving-maid to order the church-bell rung for Matins, and commanded her to run for deacon Akhílla, and then took up his stand in front of the cabinet of holy pictures to perform his obligatory de-

votions. Half an hour later the cathedral bell began to ring, and a few minutes later the small maid returned with the news that she not only had not found deacon Akhílla, but that no one knew where he was. There was no time to be lost, and Father Tuberózoff, taking his staff with its inscription, "the Rod of Aaron blossomed," emerged from his house, and directed his steps towards the cathedral. Ten minutes had not elapsed when Deacon Akhílla presented himself before the eyes of archpriestess Natálya Nikoláevna. He was what is called "quite beside himself."

"Mamma," he exclaimed, "everything which I promised you yesterday about the dead bones has turned out nonsense!"

"Well, and didn't I tell you that it was all nonsense?" replied Natálya Nikoláevna.

"No, pray tell me why it has turned out nonsense? Yesterday, as I promised you, I—I stole the remains of the man Varnávka boiled from his window, as was proper, and carried them home in a bast-sack, and put them in a cart in my yard, but today I looked and there was nothing in the cart! Am I to blame for that?"

"But who does blame you?"

"That's exactly the point; I even began to doubt whether I had not buried them by night, or covered them over, but the doctor angered me while we were bathing, and then I rushed straight from the bath to Varnávka; his windows were fastened with bolts, but I peeped through a crack, and saw that boiled man hanging again complete on his nail! Where is the Father Archpriest? I want to tell him all about it."

Natálya Nikoláevna sent the deacon after her husband, and the long-legged Akhílla overtook Tuberózoff midway.

"What makes you like this . . . why do you run, and pant, and snort, and stamp?" Father Savély asked him, when he heard his footsteps.

"I'm always that way . . . Father Savély, when I run. Haven't you noticed it?"

"No, I haven't, but why don't you tell the doctor about it? He might relieve you."

"Well, the doctor indeed! Please don't mention him to me, Father Savély, for he can't relieve anything. A Hungarian gave me some medicine, and said, 'drink it, and you will not snort or choke!' but I drank the whole of it, and it had no effect on me. But our doctor . . . why, Father Archpriest he has upset me greatly today, I am in a rage with our doctor today, Father Archpriest. Just think of his impudence, Father Archpriest. . . ." The deacon bent down to Father Savély's ear, and then added aloud: "Just think what insolence!"

"I see nothing in particular," replied the archpriest, as he ascended the steps of the cathedral: "the astragalus is a bone in the ankle, and I cannot see why you should get into such a rage."

The deacon retreated a pace backward, and exclaimed in astonishment: "So it is the ankle!"

"Yes."

Akhilla smote his brow with his palm, and shouted still more loudly: "Ah, I'm a fool!"

"Why, what have you done?"

"No, please to do me the favour of calling me a fool!"

"But tell me why I should call you that?"

"No, do you call me a fool boldly, for I almost drowned that doctor."

"Well, all right, my dear fellow, I will comply with your request: you really are a fool, and I predict that if you do not drop such stupid performances, you will not finish your life without having treated some one to death."

"Enough, Father Savély, even without that I can't understand it."

"No, it is not 'enough,' and that's the truth. What sort of behaviour is this—you are an ecclesiastical person, and half your head is white, and yet, no matter in which direction you turn, you create a scandal: here you make an uproar, there you yell, somewhere else you knock this down, and here you overturn something else; so wherever you go, you create a disturbance."

"But what do you mean, Father Savély, by my knocking down and overturning? Why, if you speak in generalities like that, no one knows of what you might accuse a man."

"Perpetually, perpetually, disorder follows on your heels!"

"I don't know why that is so, and nevertheless, it isn't my fault, but it comes from lack of coherence, for my nature is such, and it is useless for you to try to turn it in another direction. I'm standing up now for order, rather than disorder, and have done it all on that calculation."

And thereupon, Akhílla narrated speedily, but in all detail, how he had stolen the skeleton from Varnávka Prepótensky on the previous evening, and how the skeleton had vanished out of his possession and reappeared in its old place. Tuberózoff listened to Akhílla, opening his eyes wider and wider as the narrative proceeded, and involuntarily recoiling several paces, he exclaimed:

"Great Lord, what an unlucky man!"

"Who, Father Savély?" exclaimed Akhílla, in his turn, with no less amazement.

"You, my good fellow, you!"

"But why am I unlucky?"

"Who—what evil spirit—instigates you to do all that?"

"To do all what?"

"To skulk, to steal, to quarrel."

"Why, you instigated me," replied the deacon calmly, and sincerely. "You said: 'By fair means or foul, an end must be put to that,' and so I have done it, I have executed your will."

Tuberózoff merely shook his head, and turning his face towards the doors, entered the vestibule, where Madame Serbóloff was kneeling and praying, and in one corner, on the bier, flicking the dust from his trousers with his fingers, school-master Prepótensky was sitting, his face beaming, on this occasion, with joyful rapture: he gazed straight into the eyes of the archpriest and deacon, and smiled. Evidently, he had heard the conversation they had indulged in on the steps of the church,—if not all of it, at least a few of their words.

But why, for what purpose, had the teacher, who shunned the house of God, presented himself here? Both Akhílla and Tuberózoff were amazed, but with this difference, that Akhílla could not rid himself of the thought: why was Prepótensky there? While the stately Savély cast this thought out of his mind the very moment the doors opened before him, disclosing the altar, before which he was wont to stand with godly fear and trembling.

An hour has passed; the mournful service is finished. Madame Serbóloff and her distant cousin, a certain Daryánoff, have drunk tea at Father Savély's and taken their departure; Madame Serbóloff is intending to drive home towards evening, when the heat of the sun shall have abated. She now wishes to rest. Daryánoff is to come to dine with her in the tiny house of old Mrs. Prepótensky; and Father Savély has agreed to go thither a little later, to drink tea, and to escort his well-beloved spiritual daughter.

But where are Akhílla and Prepótensky?

The schoolmaster had disappeared from the church as soon as the service began, and the deacon hurried away as soon as it was finished. To Father Savély, who had lain down for a nap, it appeared as though they must be rushing about somewhere in pursuit of each other. This was on the point of becoming fact: the deacon and Varnáva were preparing for a grand battle.

CHAPTER IX

OPPRESSIVE, boresome and fatiguing is the aspect of the deserted streets of our country towns at all times; but it is particularly suicidal in its deadliness on a hot summer noon. The thick, grey dust, furrowed with the traces of the wheels which have rolled over it, the drooping and faded grass which edges the unpaved streets along the rims of the imaginary sidewalks; the grey, decaying and tottering fences; the church doors fastened with heavy padlocks; the wooden shops, abandoned by their owners, and closed with two boards laid crosswise; all this, in the midst of the midday heat, has such an infectiously slumberous effect, that a man condemned to dwell among such surroundings himself loses all alertness, and also becomes languid and sleepy.

Precisely at such a time did Valerián Nikoláevitch Daryánoff traverse several deserted streets, and, at last, turn into a very narrow lane, which was hermetically sealed by an aged picket fence. Beyond the fence a church was visible. Bending his head low, Daryánoff passed through the wicket-gate into the churchyard. Here, in a corner of the churchyard, stood the barely visible cottage of the church verger, and at the very end of it, behind a regular forest of old grave-crosses, roosted the tiny, three-windowed house of Mrs. Prepótsky, the altar-bread baker.

In the churchyard there was none of that deep dust which rested in a thick layer over the entire expanse of the squares and streets in the town. Here, on the contrary, green grass lay outspread, and two hens, which wanted to luxuriate in a dust-bath, on a spot baked by the sun, were obliged to go through the wicket for the purpose, and lie under its threshold in the street. Here they burrowed into the dust so that they

were hardly visible, and usually lay there every day, in the full conviction that no one would disturb them; at the appearance of Daryánoff, who jumped across them, they did not even flutter, or move from their places, but merely opened one eye apiece, and having sent a sleepy glance after the visitor, again veiled them with their puffy grey eyelids. Daryánoff directed his steps straight to the wicket-gate of the little house of the Prepótskys, and knocked with the heavy iron ring. There was no response. Silence reigned everywhere: no dog barked, no human voice replied. Daryánoff knocked again, but again without success. Then, abandoning all hope of summoning any one, he passed through the raspberry bushes on poles which surrounded the little house with a dense growth, and peered through one of the windows. The windows were covered with shutters to keep out the heat of the sun, but it was possible to survey the whole dwelling through the badly-fitting leaves of the shutters. There was a large, lofty room, almost devoid of furniture, and with two doors, through one of which another tiny blue chamber was visible, and in it a tall bedstead covered with a patchwork quilt of calico.

The large, empty room belonged to schoolmaster Varnávka, and the tiny chamber to his mother: these constituted their entire house, unless we reckon in the tiny kitchen, where there was no room to move about around the hearth.

Not a soul was visible in any of these rooms at the moment, but Daryánoff heard some one working hard with a chopping-knife in the vestibule beyond the door, and in the garden, under the window, some one else was either grinding brick or filing something of iron with a rasp. Being now more convinced than ever that no one could be summoned here by knocking, Daryánoff stepped to the fence which surrounded the little garden, and seeking out a crack between the boards, he proceeded to take fresh observations through it; but this was not so easy: close against the fence grew thick bushes, which did not permit him to get a view of the man who was producing the noise with brick or a file. Daryánoff found himself

compelled to take another point of observation. Setting the tip of his boot on a board which projected slightly, he raised himself up, and perceived a small, but very dense-grown and neat little garden, through the middle of which the altar-bread baker had laid out a neat little path sprinkled with yellow sand. On this path, flat upon the ground, sat teacher Varnáva. He was sitting with his legs stretched far apart, as children stretch theirs when playing ball. On the sand, between the teacher's knees, lay a whole pile of human bones, and a sheet of blue paper such as sugar-loaves are wrapped in. In each hand the teacher was holding a whole brick, and was doggedly rubbing one against the other over the sugar-paper. The perspiration was rolling in streams down Prepótensky's face, notwithstanding the fact that the teacher was sitting in the shade, and was not burdened with any superfluous toilet. His feet were bare, and he had on nothing but a shirt and trousers supported by only one suspender.

"Varnáva Vasílievitch! Open to me, Varnáva Vasílievitch!" Daryánoff shouted to him, but this call produced no effect. Prepótensky went on doggedly rubbing his bricks, his elbows working back and forth like two arms of a machine; his damp locks swung from side to side, keeping time, and he himself was swaying also, like a movable cylinder, hearing nothing and responding to nothing.

The visitor might sooner have got an answer out of the dead who reposed in the abandoned cemetery, than from the teacher thus absorbed in his occupation. Daryánoff did not call to him again, but sprang upon the fence, and flew down in Prepótensky's garden. Light as was his spring, still the boards clattered, as they sprang apart, and startled by the crash, the teacher promptly dropped his bricks, and flinging himself on all fours, he seized in his arms the human bones spread out before him. Evidently, Prepótensky was terribly frightened, but could not run away.

Without abandoning his prostrate attitude, he merely stared in alarm at the movements in the thick raspberry patch, and kept collecting in his arms, with ever-increasing care, the bones

which lay beneath him. At the moment when the nearest rows of raspberry bushes moved apart before him, the teacher swiftly sprang to his long legs, and presented himself to the amazed eyes of Daryánoff in the strangest of aspects. Pre-pótensky's dishevelled hair hanging in elf-locks, his perspiring face covered with the red brick-dust, his frightened eyes, and long, half-clad figure laden with human bones, and his belt sprinkled with the finely-ground brick, which, at a distance, made him look exactly as though he were drenched in blood, caused him to resemble a cannibal savage more than a man who was engaged in a work of enlightenment.

"Well, Varnáva Vasílievitch, my dear fellow, you certainly are working diligently! One can't even make you hear," began the visitor as he emerged; and Varnáva, on espying him, suddenly beamed all over, winked violently, and exclaimed: "So it's you! You see, I thought it was Akhílla."

And with these words, the teacher joyously opened his arms, and the whole pile of human bones tumbled down on the path, exactly as though he had suddenly disembowelled himself.

"Ah, Valerián Nikoláevitch," he cried: "if you only knew what things are going on here with us! The devil take it all, that I am obliged to remain in this accursed Russia after all that!"

"Good heavens! What do you mean? Can't you tell?"

"Of course I can, if only . . . if you aren't a spy."

"I should hope not!"

"Then sit down on the bench, and I will work. Sit down, please, it is very agreeable to me to have you here, for, at any rate, you are a witness, and I will work and narrate."

The visitor accepted the invitation, and begged his host to tell him what was his grievance, and when it had begun.

CHAPTER X

“MY grief, Valerián Nikoláevitch, began when I was born,” began Prepótensky: “and this grief consists chiefly, in the fact that I am my mother’s child!”

“Console yourself, my dear friend, all people are children of their mothers,” remarked Daryánoff, mopping the perspiration from his brow.—“Only Macduff was cut from the womb, and that in order that Macbeth might not be vanquished by one born of woman.”

“Oh, well, Macbeth! . . . What has Macbeth to do with it? We don’t want any Macbeths, but we do want science; but what is a man to do when it is impossible for him to study here? I will take my oath on anything you like, that in St. Petersburg, and in Naples, and in every country wherever a man undertakes to study, he will not encounter such obstacles as with us. They say that Spain. . . . But what is Spain? In Spain the Lutherans are not permitted to have the Bible, but they have conspiracies and uprisings there, and do all sorts of things. I am convinced, that if any one there provided himself with bones for the purpose of study, they would not be forbidden him. But here, from the very first day that I got a set of bones, my own mother who gave me birth, came and nagged at me: ‘My child, dear little Varnávka, you had better let me bury *him*.’ ‘Whom do you mean by *him*?’ Why is it *he* still? Why are these bones *he* and not *she*?’ Was I right or not?”

“Perfectly right.”

“Very good, sir! Now they talk as though I don’t persuade my mother respectfully. It isn’t true, sir! On the contrary, I said to her: ‘Mamma, don’t touch the bones, it’s stupid; you don’t understand,’ I said, ‘they are necessary to’

me, I am studying man by their aid.' Well, and what would you have me do with her, when she answers: 'No, my dear Varnásha, all the same, it will be better for me to bury him.' Now, isn't that going altogether too far?"

"It certainly is."

"And here's another point, she inscribed the bones in her book of names for requiem services."¹

"You don't say so!"

"I assure you, on my honour! She has it written down there: 'Have in remembrance, O Lord, thy servant *Name*.'"²

"What marvel are you narrating?"

"There's the marvel for you, and out of that marvel has arisen a scandal!"

"Well?"

"Yes, of course, sir! Now, what do you think of it? All this, you see, is connected with the Church. Hence arises a whole series of misunderstandings and even of capital crimes."

"Good Lord!"

"Precisely that, sir, I'm telling you precisely that, because my mother writes down people whose very names she doesn't know, and, of course, you understand that when her parish priest begins to read off her Book of Remembrance, his police instincts immediately come into play: 'What people are these. 'Name,' says he, 'who have no names?'"

"You should have persuaded her not to inscribe it."

"I tried to persuade her, sir. I said to her: 'Don't pray for him, please, mamma, he is a Jew.' She didn't believe it! 'You are mistaken,' said she, 'tis the devil prompts you to deceive me, I know that Jews have tails!' 'Nobody, either Jew or non-Jew ever has a tail,' I told her. Well, and then

¹ Persons who wish to have the priest pray for the health of living relatives and friends, or for the souls of the dead, send the Christian names (only) to the sanctuary, on a bit of paper. But those who have such prayers, for special persons, with more or less regularity, inscribe them, for convenience, in a little book. TRANSLATOR.

² The Service suggests the insertion of the Christian name by "N." or "Name" in rubricated letters. The old woman copied literally. TRANSLATOR.

we wrangled: I, as was proper, defended the Jews, and she took the other side; I declared they have no tails, she insisted that they have! I said, 'they haven't,' and she said, 'they have!'—'They haven't!' 'They have!' And after a while, when she had got excited, she did nothing but shout: 'Ksh-sh-sh, ksh-sh-sh!' and wave her outspread hands in front of my face as though I had been a hen. And now, just fancy, they say that women should have freedom! Capital, sir, and I advocate the freedom of women; but it must be granted with discrimination: grant freedom to a young, cultivated woman, who does not wish to be restricted in her actions, but to old women. . . . No, sir, I am the first to oppose that, and I am even amazed that no one develops that idea in literature. Why, the very worst people take advantage of it. "Take priest Zakháriya, for example—all of a sudden he is in favour of female emancipation! Yes, yes, sir, he stands up for my mother! 'If you have the right not to believe in God,' he says, 'then she is a human being just as much as you are, and has a right to believe!' *Just as much*, do you hear? If it weren't for such views as these, my mother would have surrendered and yielded to me long ago: I wouldn't have let her go to church, and she would have given up baking the altar-breads, and have entered Madame Biziúkhin's service as nurse; but either Akhílla or Tuberózoff himself are for ever arraying her against me."

"Come, do stop that, please!"

"And why should I stop it, when I have proofs that it is so? Tuberózoff never did love me, but now he simply hates me because of the natural sciences, and because I have put him to confusion."

"How did you do that?"

"I've confounded him a hundred times, and only last week I clipped his wings again. In the inspector's room at the school he started to orating about the feast-days—said they were possessed of a very special quality, and I put him down in the presence of everybody. I simply demonstrated to him before everybody, the inaccuracy in reckoning the feast-days,

which has been mathematically proved. 'Where are our feast days?' said I. 'We keep Christmas, but abroad, it has taken place thirteen days before.' Wasn't I right?"

"You mean to say twelve days, not thirteen."

"Yes, I believe it is twelve days, but that is not the point; the point is, that he immediately banged the table with his palm, and shouted out: 'Hey, there, mathematician, look out that you don't suffer some day for your physics!' In the first place, what does he mean by the word *physics*? You understand that that is ignorance, and cynicism; and moreover, I ask you whether you consider that an answer?"

The visitor burst out laughing, and replied that, although it was an answer, still, it was a very strange one.

"Well, I should say so! it was stupid, of course; but there's a whole series of such things, sir. Here, for example, only last night when I was leaving Madame Biziúkhin's, I saw walking a little ahead of me that commissioner Danílka,—you know, that loungee who for two rubles went to steal Glitch's horse, while Akhílla was churning butter. I entered into conversation with Danílka. 'Well, Danílka,' said I, 'where have you been?' He answered that he had been at the commissioner of police's, having carried him some berries from the prefect, and he had heard them reading about a dead man in the Finnish town of Reval, who had been lying a hundred years without corruption, but now orders had been issued to bury him. 'I don't know how true it may be that such a thing happened, but right afterwards, they began to talk about you,' Danílka informed me. Of course, I took alarm, but he soothed me: 'not about you yourself,' he said, 'but about your dead people, whom you keep in your house.' Do you understand that intrigue? I gave Danílka twenty kopéks: what else was there to do? it isn't nice, but spies are necessary, and I always say that spies are necessary, and Madame Biziúkhin and I agree entirely about that. One can't get along without spies, when one is introducing new doctrines, because one must study society. Yes, sir, well and so . . . what was I saying? Yes! I gave Danílka twenty kopéks, and said:

'Tell me everything.' And so he told me, that when they had finished reading that newspaper, the deacon turned the conversation on my bones. 'I brought that newspaper here on purpose,' he said, 'because I wanted to direct your attention to that. . . .' But that's a downright lie, because he never reads anything, and Danílka had brought him nuts from Lyálin's shop in that paper. 'Vóin Vasílievitch,' said he, 'you and that doctor of yours have made a great mistake in giving the drowned man to Varnáva; but you can remedy it.' The prefect, of course, knows my character, and he said that I would not give him up, and of course I wouldn't do anything of the kind. But Akhílla says: 'It's quite a simple matter to take the bones away from him, and bury them.' The prefect says: 'How about giving the policeman orders to take the bones away from him?' But that bandit says: 'I don't mind, but it isn't necessary; I'll take them at once, without any orders, and I'll place them in a little coffin,—a child's coffin—and that will be the end of it.' "

Prepótensky suddenly dashed at the bones, covered them with his arms, as a hen covers her chicklings with her wings, when they are frightened by the approach of a hawk, and ejaculated in a nervous voice:

"No, sir, excuse me! So long as I am alive, there will be no end to it. And it's enough on your part, that they keep putting it all off a bit."

"What is it that 'they' keep putting off?"

"Do you mean to say that you don't understand?"

"Is it the revolution?"

The schoolmaster stopped his work, and nodded his head, with a grin.

CHAPTER XI

“**H**AVING received this information from Danílka,” continued Varnáva, “I immediately returned to Madame Biziúkhin’s, in order that she might know about it, and an hour later I reached home, and found not a single bone! ‘Where are they?’ I shriek, ‘where?’ But that lady, my progenitress, replies: ‘Don’t be angry, my dear, my Varnáshenka says she (and a very pretty name that is, please observe, which she has given me, and it might also be twisted into Varnáshenek, and Tchertáshenek)¹ ‘don’t be angry,’ says she, ‘the authorities have demanded possession of them.’—‘What nonsense,’ I shouted, ‘what nonsense, is this: what authorities?’—‘While you were gone,’ says she, ‘Father Deacon Akhilla came in through the window, and gathered them all up, and carried them away.’—‘Well,’ says I, ‘you might have used your brains, if you have any: why do you call the deacon an authority?’—‘My dear,’ says she, ‘what makes you say that, what do you mean? Why, you know he has been anointed.’—Now, did you ever hear of such a thing,—please tell me! Oh, there you go laughing, you think it is funny; but it was anything but funny for me when I went to that bandit’s. Yes, sir; Akhilla declares that I am a coward, and all of them think the same; but last night I proved that I am no coward for I went straight to Akhilla’s house. When I arrived, he was fast asleep. I knocked at the window and said: ‘Give me my bones, Akhilla Andréitch!’ At first he woke up with difficulty, and began to make a fuss with me; ‘What dost thou want with those bones?’ (What did he mean by that familiar ‘thou’? what did he mean by such familiar-

¹ *Varnáshenek*—a diminutive of *varnák*, a convict, *Tchertáshenek*, a diminutive of *tchort*, devil. TRANSLATOR.

ity?) 'You're better off without the bones.'—'That's no business of yours,' said I, 'whether I'm better off or not.'—'No,' said he, 'quite the contrary. It is my business,' says he: I'm a servitor of the church.'—'But you haven't any right, you know,' said I, 'to take other people's property away.'—'And do you mean to assert that bones are property?' says he. 'Haven't you comprehended yet,' says he, 'that you are not even permitted to hold that sort of property?' But I retorted, that most assuredly, servitors of the church were not permitted to steal. 'You certainly are not well acquainted with the English laws,' said I. 'In England they would hang you for that.'—'Well,' says he, 'if you are going to argue about various laws, do you know that if you were sent to the chancellery of the gendarmes for that, they would immediately drop you into the cellar waist deep, and begin to whip you with two bundles of rods. And how about your England then? Hey? You'd be in a pretty state after that, wouldn't you?'—But I answered him: 'You know everything,' said I, 'you even know how many bundles of rods they use for flogging there.' And he retorted, 'Of course,' says he, 'I know; it's according to a perfectly simple rule, and any one who has undergone it himself can understand, that they will use the rods on both sides, and so stop a man in the very best manner.'—'A truly beautiful picture,' said I; but he replied: 'Yes,' said he, 'and you just take note of it, but now, my good fellow, if you take my advice, you will do well to forget all about your nonsense, and go away.' And thereupon I heard him fling himself on his couch again. Well, of course I understood how he had broken in, but in order to find out more from him I said: 'Deacon, you don't serve in the gendarmerie, that you should enforce the laws.' But if you will believe it, he didn't understand in the least what I was aiming at, and snapped out: 'And how do you know that I don't serve in the gendarmerie? Perhaps. Perhaps, now, I have white gloves also, and I'll show them to you this very minute if you interfere with my sleep any longer.' Well, of course, I didn't wait for that, in

the first place, because it did not interest me, and in the second place, I had already found out all I required,—and moreover, being acquainted with his beastly habit of fighting. . . . ‘No, sir,’ said I, ‘I don’t want to see them and I take no interest in your proofs,’ and I immediately went to the Biziúkhins, in order to tell Dárya Nikoláevna all about it. Dárya Nikoláevna instantly said the same thing that I did,—that she herself suspected that all of them here are in the service of the secret police.”

“Who is in the service of the secret police?” inquired Varnáva’s amazed companion.

“Why, all these various wretched people of ours, and, in particular, the priests, Savély, Akhílla.”

“Come now, my dear fellow, you and your Dárya Nikoláevna have lost your senses,—not to mince matters.”

“No sir: you can’t cheat Dárya Nikoláevna on that score; she has already endured a lot from those bold fellows, you know.”

“Your Dárya Nikoláevna is mistaken,—she has not endured anything from them.”

“Who hasn’t? Dárya Nikoláevna?”

“Yes.”

“I’m much obliged to you!” replied the teacher, with a comical reverence.

“What do you mean?”

“Why, good gracious, they flogged her,” ejaculated Prepótsky proudly.

“In her childhood; and very little, at that, it is quite evident.”

“No, sir, not in her childhood, but only two days before her marriage.”

“You amaze me more and more.”

“There’s nothing to be amazed at, it’s a fact, sir.”

“Well, pray excuse my ignorance,—I was not aware of that fact.”

“That’s precisely what I’m telling you—that everybody

ought to know, in order to be able to judge. The affair began when Dárya Nikoláevna made up her mind to leave her father."

"Why?"

"Why? How strangely you ask that!"

"I ask it in that way, because, apparently, her father did not turn her out of doors, did not oppress her, did not put restraint upon her."

"As if that amounted to anything! He did not subject her to any sort of force, but she simply wanted to go away—and she went. Why should she wish to live with her father? Biziúkhin was tutoring her younger brother, and he approved of it, and agreed to marry her so that her father would have no rights over her, and her father would not consent to her marrying Biziúkhin, and regarded him as a fool; but she, being determined to make a scandal, could not yield, of course, and arranged matters in her own way. . . . She took such measures that it was impossible to think of marrying her to any one else, and, you understand, she told the whole thing to her father, with perfect honesty.—Are you listening to me, Valerián Nikoláevitch?"

"I am not only listening, but my curiosity is increasing with every word you utter."

"That is quite as it should be, for the interest is going to redouble presently. So, she honourably and frankly disclosed to her father that fact which was of significance, and he did nothing more nor less than the following villainy; he said to her: 'Go to your aunt's tomorrow, my dear, and tell her all this.' Dárya Nikoláevna, suspecting nothing, just went, and he, aided by that lady, flogged her.

"She rushed straight from them to the officer of gendarmes. 'Make an examination,' said she, 'and report to St. Petersburg,—I don't want to conceal the fact,—let everybody know what sort of institution parents are.' And the officer said: 'I won't examine you, nor make a report,' said he. 'I entirely agree with your old man, and would very gladly help him, if he should undertake to repeat it,' Well, and what

can you expect after that? There's our secret police for you! Dárya Nikoláevna says: "I gained something, at any rate, for I have studied them, and I know," and so when I imparted to her yesterday evening my discoveries as to Akhílla, she said: "That's it exactly—he's a spy! And now," said she, "in your dangerous position, the chief question is to get possession of your bones, and study them as spitefully as possible. Akhílla cannot possibly have got rid of them anywhere by night," said she, "and if you sneak off immediately to his house, you may be able to carry them back. Only mind one thing," said she—"don't let him catch you, or he may murder you."

"Murder you?"

"That's what she said, because she knows Akhílla's habits; however, she said: 'but never mind—just wrap my thick woollen shawl around your neck, and put my wadded hood on your head, so that if he does catch you and thrash you, the blows will fall softly and will not hurt you.' So I wrapped myself up well in all these things, as she suggested, and set out. I arrived for the second time in that beast's yard. . . . The dog started to bark, but Dárya Nikoláevna had foreseen that, and had given me a piece of meat-pie for the dog. I fed the dog, and went on, and right before me, I saw a cart standing there; I went up to the cart, and in it I found all my bones!"

"Well, and then, of course, you proceeded at once to work?"

"Of course, I did! In an instant I had snatched Dárya Nikoláevna's hood from my head, tied up the bones in it, and started back at full gallop."

"So that ended the affair?"

"Ended? On the contrary, it is now raging at full blast. Do you want me to tell you the rest?"

"Oh, please do!"

CHAPTER XII

“**I** WILL begin by explaining how and why I came to be in the church today. Early this morning, Alexandra Ivánovna Serbóloff came to our house. Of course, you know her quite as well as I do: she is a believer, and her convictions in regard to many things are much behind the times, but she helps my mother in various ways, and so I sacrifice myself, and force myself not to quarrel with her. But why do I say this? Ah, yes!—she came to me—my mamma—and said: ‘Get up, you thus-and-so, my dear, Varnásha, escort Alexandra Ivánovna to church, so that the excise-officer’s dogs may not attack her.’ I went. You know, I never enter a church; but, naturally, I understand that neither Akhilla nor Savély dare to touch me there, so I went. But as I stood there, I suddenly remembered that I had left my chamber, where the bones are, unlocked, and I rushed home. When I arrived, my mother was not there; I looked at the wall: not a bone was left!”

“She had buried them?”

“Yes, sir.”

“No jesting—had she buried them?”

“Oh, stop that, please: she jest, forsooth! I began to question her, ‘Dear mamma, I will adore you,—only, tell me honestly, where are my bones?’—‘Don’t ask,’ says she, ‘they are at rest now, Varnásha, my dear.’ I did everything: I wept, I threatened to commit suicide, and, at last, I even promised her that I would say my prayers,—and still she wouldn’t tell me! Furious, downright raging, I went to the school, with a firm determination to take a spade tonight, and dig up one of the graves in the churchyard, and get myself some new bones, so that no one could dispute my right; and

I would have done it, without fail. And yet, I believe that, also, is regarded as a crime?"

"Yes, and a big one, to boot."

"Well, there, you see! And who would have driven me to it? My mother. And it most certainly would have happened; but suddenly, to my good luck, a youngster came into the schoolroom and said that the pigs had rooted up some bones or other on the river bank. I flew thither, in the full expectation that they were my bones,—and so it proved! The people kept saying, 'bury them. . . .' I said: 'Get out of the way!' All at once I heard Akhílla. . . . I seized the bones and fled. Akhílla grabbed me by the coat, I made a turn, and crack! the shirt went to the devil; Akhílla seized me by the collar,—crack! the collar went to the devil; Akhílla seized me by the waistcoat,—crack . . . the waistcoat was in two pieces; he caught me by the neck,—I flew away, and here I am sitting and cleaning them, when you give me another fright. I thought it was Akhílla again."

"But do you suppose Akhílla will be after you again, and will come over the fence!—He's a deacon, you know!"

"He's a deacon! Oh, you may say 'deacon' as much as you like! Much he cares for that! Commissioner Danílka told me yesterday that when he took leave, he said to Tuberózoff: 'Now, Father Savély, until I have smashed that Varnáva,' says he, 'don't call me Akhílla the Deacon, but do all of you call me *Akhílla the warrior*.' Well, let him fight, I'm not afraid, but from this time forth, I know what to do. I have decided that I cannot live here any longer; I have some correspondents in Petersburg; a certain gentleman is establishing an undertaking there, and I'm going away to Petersburg. I will tell you, that I have already made an effort, and Dárya Nikoláevna and I have sent several articles thither, and they always answer us: 'Harsher!' It's very fine that they want them 'harsher'; I'll be harsh enough there, I won't stand on any ceremony there; but here, one can't draw breath, when one has to pay almost with his life for a dead bone. But, on the other hand, just imagine what baseness has started up:

even the most trustworthy newspapers are beginning to ridicule the passion for the natural sciences, which is spreading among us! Have you read that?"

"I think I have read something of that sort."

"Aha! and you understood it? Then tell me why, in that case, they enticed us to work over frogs and all the rest?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know? Well then, I'll tell you, that they're not going to get off so easily! Yes, sir; I'm going to gather up my bones, and go to Petersburg, and hurl these bones straight in their faces, yes, straight in their ugly faces! And they can drag me to their police-station if they like."

CHAPTER XIII

“**H**A, ha, ha! You will be doing a splendid thing!” suddenly remarked Madame Serbóloff, who had been standing, up to that moment, behind a thick cherry-bush, unnoticed by either of the speakers.

Prepótenky clasped the unbuttoned shirt across his breast, half rose, and drawing up, with the other hand, his trousers all soiled with the brick-dust, said:

“Pardon me, Alexandra Ivánovna, for not being properly dressed. . .”

“Never mind; one is not exacting over a working man’s toilet; but come—your mother is calling you to dinner.”

“No, Alexandra Ivánovna, I will not go to dinner. I can no longer live with my mother; all is over between us.”

“You ought to be ashamed to speak like that; she loves you!”

“There’s no use in your crying shame on me. She is friendly with my enemies; she buries my bones; and if I light a cigarette at the shrine lamp, now and then, she gets angry over it. . . .”

“But why do you light your cigarettes at her shrine-lamps? Have you no other fire, pray?”

“But that’s simply stupid!”

Madame Serbóloff smiled, and said:

“I thank you humbly!”

“No; I don’t mean you, I’m speaking of the lamp: it’s nothing but fire, all the same.”

“Well, just for that reason, light your cigarette at some other fire.”

“It makes no difference, she’ll find fault with something else. Yesterday, for example, I let the dog lap a little soup

from the tureen, and mamma burst out weeping over it, and smashed the tureen in her anger. 'It's not fit to use now,' she says, 'the dog has snuffed on it.' I put it up to you, Valerián Nikoláevitch, you know physics; can anything be *snuffed on*? You can *snuff*, and *snuff out*, but *snuff on*! Why, no one but a fool could say such a thing!"

"But you might have refrained from feeding the dog out of that bowl."

"Yes, I might have, but why should I?"

"In order not to pain your mother."

"Yes, so that's the way you look at it! In my opinion, every sort of artfulness is unworthy of an honest man."

"But is it worthy to eat horse-ham in your old mother's presence?"

"Aha! she has been complaining to you already about that! Well, out of curiosity, I bought some smoked mare's ribs from a Tatár acquaintance of mine.¹ It's a very toothsome morsel, I assure you. Dárya Nikoláevna Biziúkhin and I ate a couple of the ribs for luncheon, and we fed her children on them, and the third I brought to mamma, and mamma, in ignorance of the facts, ate heartily and praised the meat, and then, all of a sudden, when I told her, there was the mischief to pay."

"He gave her a treat," remarked Madame Serbóloff, addressing Daryánoff. "However, let no mention of this be made at dinner. . . . You had better come to dinner."

"No, ma'am, I've already told you that I will not, and I won't."

"But why are you angry with bread and salt?"

"I'm not angry, but it is impossible for me to leave this spot. I am in such a state of mind that I anticipate all sorts of horrid things from every quarter." Madame Serbóloff laughed quietly, gave her arm to Daryánoff, and they went to dinner, leaving the schoolmaster over his bones.

¹ Tatárs keep the horse-meat shops in Russia, and all Tatárs are fond of horseflesh. TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER XIV

MRS. PREPÓTENSKY, the altar-bread baker, a diminutive old woman, with a tiny face, and eternally-astonished, kindly eyes, shaded by eyebrows shaped like French apostrophes, apologized to Daryánoff for not having heard him when he was knocking so long, and immediately after her apology, she leaned across the table towards him, and asked, in a whisper:

“Have you seen my Varnáša?”

Daryánoff replied that he had seen him.

“He grieves me endlessly, Valerián Nikoláitch,” complained the old woman.

“Why, never mind him, why do you worry? He is young, he will grow older, marry and change.”

“Change. . . . No, my dear friend, how can he marry? It is impossible. He is endlessly spoiled, so far: he endlessly disbelieves in God: he eats milk and meat during all the fasts, and even in Passion Week he eats endlessly, and I, my dear friend, to tell you the truth, am endlessly afraid of him at night; I am endlessly disturbed about him. . . .”

The little black apostrophes over the eyes of the tiny, timid old woman, twitched, and with a shudder she stammered out:

“And besides that, my dear friend, I am always having such endlessly strange dreams, that when I wake up, I immediately whisper: ‘O holy Simeon, expound my dream!’ but still, if I only had some one in the house to talk to, I could bear it; but just consider, that I am always alone, and always with dead folks. I’m not afraid of a dead person who has had a proper funeral service chanted over him, my dear young friends, but Varnáša won’t let me have a funeral for this one.”

“Well, you must not be angry with him,—he’s a kind fellow.”

"Kind, yes, of course he's kind; I don't want to lie about him and say he's ugly-tempered. I was his happy mother, and he used to be endlessly kind to me, until he entered the sixth class, in philosophy. He used to go to church when he came home, and I used to take him to Father Savély's, and Father Savély used even to pet him endlessly, and used to help him on a bit, in one way and another, but all of a sudden, I don't know myself what came over him: he began to argue all the time. And ever, after that, he got worse and worse every time he came from the seminary, and at last, he exasperated all good people so against him, that at a christening at Father Zakháriya's, he began to attack even the father arch-priest himself. Ah, it is painful for me, my dears!" continued the old woman, wrinkling up her face bitterly. "And now, only day before yesterday, I found out that he and the excise officer's wife, Madame Biziúkhin, had been eating frogs in sauce! O Lord! O Lord! And does he do that out of hunger, pray? He is bewitched. I don't care what you say, but I can't help believing that he is bewitched. Father Zakháriya expressly read me from the 'Domestic Chat,' about the son of a nobleman who went mad, and ten men couldn't hold him. That's the way it is with Varnáva! no one can hold him back! He is frightfully timid, and not long ago, less than a year in all, I used to escort him whenever it was necessary that he should go out in the evening; but now if he gets started, he would shout, 'I won't give up my own, I won't!' and flourishes his hand like that, and adds: 'No, cut all their throats, cut their throats!' So I live in constant fear of seeing him in the hands of the police, and in prison."

Again the altar-bread baker dived out, wiped away her tears in the kitchen, and reappearing, began once more:

"I give him water over which a spell has been said, every day to drink, I confess to you. Of course, he does not know it, but I give it to him, nevertheless, only, it does no good,—and 'tis a sin. But Father Savély says one thing: that it would pay me to exile him to Tashkent. 'Why shouldn't I continue to try kindness?' says I, 'Because,' says he, 'you can't do any-

thing with him by kindness.' He thinks that Varnáva has no feelings at all by nature. But even if that is so, my children, I'm sorry for him all the same. . . ." And again the altar-bread maker vanished.

"What an unhappy creature!" whispered the young lady as the old woman went out.

"Precisely," agreed her companion, adding, "and that block-head is still obstinate, and hasn't come to dinner even yet."

"Really now, do go and bring him in."

"Why, he's as stubborn as a horse, and won't come."

"Won't he, indeed? Tell him that I command him, that I am an agent of the secret police, and command him to come immediately, otherwise I will report that he is making ready to go to St. Petersburg."

Daryánoff laughed, rose and went for Varnáva. Meanwhile, the teacher, who had been employing the time in hiding his treasure, was feeling a healthy appetite, and when the fresh invitation to dinner reached him, it was not without difficulty that he played his part and refused.

In order to rescue this voluntary martyr from his difficult position, the young man who had been sent for him bent down in a mysterious way to his ear, and whispered to him what Madame Serbóloff had said.

"She is a spy!" cried Varnáva, flushing scarlet all over.

"Yes."

"And perhaps . . ."

"What?"

"And perhaps you are also?"

"Yes, I am."

Varnáva pressed his hand in a friendly way, and said:

"I thank you for not making a secret of this." And then he went to dinner with a clear conscience. "Very well, I obey you."

CHAPTER XV

THE jest was a success. Varnáva had an excuse for presenting himself, and, moreover, for presenting himself in a dignified manner. He entered the room as though he were the victim of hostile powers; and seated himself at the narrow end of the table opposite Daryánoff. Between these two, on the third side, set Madame Serbóloff, and the fourth side of the table remained empty. The altar-bread baker herself was in the habit of never sitting down to table with her son, and so she did not sit down today with her guests, but merely waited upon them. The old woman was now in raptures at beholding before her her much-learned son; joy and sorrow chased each other over her face, her eyelids were red; her lower lip quivered gently, and her little old feet did not walk but ran all the time, and she constantly endeavoured, whether running or halting, to adopt such attitudes as should render her face invisible to all.

"Can't we stop you now?" Daryánoff said jestingly to her.

"No, it is impossible, Valerián Nikoláitch," she replied merrily, and hastily trotting away again, she swallowed an unbidden tear in the kitchen.

The guests resorted to craft to detain the old woman, and praised her cookery; but she modestly rejected all these praises, saying that she knew how to prepare only the simplest things.

"But your simple things are very savoury."

"No, how can they be savoury? but perhaps they may be the very best for the health, as 'tis said: and I don't even know that, Varnáva here always eats this sort of food, but look at the sort of fellow he is: he's hollow, apparently!"

"Hm!" ejaculated Varnáva, casting a reproachful glance at his mother, and shaking his head.

"Why do you do that? I vow, you really are hollow, Varnáša!"

"You just say that again," said the schoolmaster in a challenging tone.

"But what do you find so offensive in it, Varnáša? In the morning you drink milk endlessly; you drink tea with bread endlessly; you eat roast meat and porridge too, and you rise from the table again endlessly hollow,—'tis a disease. Listen to me, I say, my dear son. . . ."

"Mamma!" the teacher interrupted her, with an angry shout.

"What's wrong with that, Varnáša? What I say, is: When you get up in the morning, Varnáša, you must say, 'O Lord, fill my emptiness,' and eat. . . ."

"Mamma!" yelled Prepótsky louder than before.

"But what makes you angry, you little goose? I say: say, 'O Lord, fill my emptiness,' and eat an altar-bread that has been sent to the sanctuary at the mass,—for you know," she added, addressing her guests, "I always take out one particle for myself and one for him, so that we may be in one tabernacle in the other world; but he won't eat it. Why?"

"Why? do you want to know why?—very well then: because I don't want to be in the same place with you anywhere! Do you understand? Not anywhere, either in this world, or in any other—"

But before the teacher could finish this speech, the old woman turned pale, began to tremble, and her two cherished porcelain plates slipped from her hands, banged against the floor, gave out a ringing sound, and broke into flinders.

"Varnáša!" she cried, "have you renounced me?"

"Yes, ma'am, yes, ma'am, yes, ma'am, I have renounced you and I do renounce you! I'm too tired of you here, to want to see you again in the next world."

"Ts! Ts! Ts!" said the altar-bread baker, weeping, as she tried to hush her son, and began to clap her hands directly under his nose, so that she might not hear his renunciation. But Varnáva shouted much louder than his mother clapped. Then she rushed to the holy picture, and waving the outspread

fingers of her feeble hands before the ikóna, she shrieked in delirium:

"Do not listen to him, O Lord! do not listen! do not listen!" and thereupon collapsed in the corner and wept.

This painful and wholly unexpected scene agitated all who were present, with the exception of Prepótensky. The teacher remained perfectly calm, and went on eating with the appetite which never failed him: Madame Serbólóff rose from the table, and followed the old woman as she fled from the room. Daryánoff saw the altar-bread baker embrace Alexandra Ivánovna. He rose, and closed the door into the room where the two women were, and went and stood by the window himself.

Prepótensky continued to eat, as before.

"When is Alexandra Ivánovna going home?" he inquired, rolling the food in his mouth.

"When the heat is abated," replied Daryánoff drily.

"So that's when!" drawled Prepótensky.

"Yes, and Tuberózoff is coming here to see her."

"Tuberózoff? Here? In our house?"

"Yes, in your house, but not to see you—to see Alexandrine."

Daryánoff conducted this last conversation with Prepótensky with his back turned on him, and staring into the yard; but at this word, he wheeled round facing the schoolmaster, and said, through a barely perceptible smile:

"But you seem to be afraid of Tuberózoff, nevertheless!"

"I? I am afraid of him?"

"Well, yes; I see that your nose actually seemed to turn green when I said that he was coming."

"My nose turned green? I assure you that it only seemed so to you, and that I'm not afraid of him, as I'll prove to you this very day."

And thereupon, Prepótensky rose from his seat, and hastily left the room. It never entered the visitor's head what bold thoughts were born and grew to maturity at that moment in Varnáva's desperate brain; but the indulgent reader shall hear about this in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

ON leaving the room, Prepóten-sky dived into a small shed, and there, after divesting himself of his upper garment, he crawled into the hayloft, and thence, after having with difficulty moved aside two of the ceiling boards, he pushed himself through a decidedly narrow space into a small storehouse, which was closed from the outside. This small storehouse contained all sorts of household stuff. There casks stood on the floor, a ham was suspended aloft, and bunches of summer savoury, thyme and fennel projected from pegs. The schoolmaster touched nothing, but climbed up upon a high pine bin, covered with a sloping lid, drew from it a large, sloping hawker's tray of linden wood, as clean as the windows of a mirror-shop, and immediately began to lower himself and it back into the shed, where he had very artfully hidden the ill-starred bones. Positively, no one was watching the schoolmaster, but like a man who has already begun to dream of "a dangerous situation," he trusted no one; he shrank and concealed himself from every one, lest he might be hindered in carrying out his enterprise, and carrying it out at the proper moment, and with all due solemnity. About an hour had elapsed from the moment when Varnáva had shut himself up in the shed, and twilight was beginning to fall, when the knocker at the frail wicket-gate of the altar-bread baker's little house clattered.

Tuberózoff had arrived. Varnáva, in his shed, could hear the steps of the aged porch bend and creak beneath the heavy tread of the big archpriest; he heard the greetings and expressions of goodwill to Madame Serbóloff and old Mrs. Prepóten-sky. But still Varnáva did not come forth, or betray what action he was planning to perpetrate.

"Well, and how is my dear little widow of Nain, and how is your learned son?" Father Savély addressed the widow, who had set out a small, white table on her porch, where the company were to drink tea.

"My Varnáša? God knows, Father Archpriest. He certainly must have lost courage, and hidden himself away from you somewhere."

"Why should he hide in his own house?"

"He's very much afraid of you, Father Archpriest."

"The Lord have mercy, what is he afraid of me for? He'd better be afraid of himself and look out for himself," and Tuberózoff began to narrate to Daryánoff and Madame Serbóloff how Akhílla had amazed him by his performances the night before.

"Who asked him to do that? Who commissioned him? Who gave him orders?" argued the old man, and then answered, "No one, he took it into his head, of his own accord, to have the matter out with Varnáva Vasílievitch, and they have set the whole town to talking."

"But didn't you give him orders to do it, Father Archpriest?" inquired the old woman.

"Come, tell me, please:—would I order such idiotic things?" retorted Tuberózoff, and turned the conversation on another topic: and in the meantime, another half-hour had fled, and the visitors were preparing to go home. Still Varnáva did not show himself, but no sooner had Madame Serbóloff's coachman driven her horse up to the porch, than the doors of the shed which concealed the teacher burst open with a resounding bang, and he triumphantly presented himself to the eyes of the spectators, who were astonished at his appearance.

Prepótensky was clothed in all his customary attire, and with both hands he was holding on his head the new tray which he had filched from his mother, and upon which the well-known human bones were now arranged in symmetrical order.

Before any one could make up his mind as to what this apparition of Prepótensky with such a burden might signify, the teacher strode with it, with stately tread, past the porch

upon which Tuberózoff was standing, stuck out his tongue at him, and passed through the cemetery, out upon the street.

The altar-bread baker's visitors simply exclaimed in amazement, and could not restrain their desire to see how this demonstration would end. Emerging, in the wake of Varnáva, upon the quiet street, they perceived that the teacher was moving noiselessly on, dawdling along at his leisure, and carrying his burden cautiously, as though it were not a board spread with dried bones, but some precious and fragile vessel, filled to the very brim with some still more precious fluid; but behind them, there suddenly became audible a sound of quiet weeping, broken by asthma, and at their backs appeared the altar-bread baker bathed in tears.

The poor old woman was quivering, and as she convulsively bit the tips of all five fingers drawn into a cluster, she whispered:

"Why is he doing that? Why is he carrying such a thing about the town?"

And thereupon, suddenly grasping the situation, she whimpered with pain, and with an alertness inconsistent with her age, she darted in pursuit of her son. The decrepit old woman ran with leaps and jumps, like birds who fly badly before they rise into the air, but Varnáva walked quietly on; nevertheless, it was difficult to judge whether the altar-bread baker, even with such a brisk gait, would be able to overtake her son, who had already reached the end of the street which she was only just entering upon. Whether this was to be or not to be was decided by an accident, which imparted to this whole procession and pursuit an entirely unexpected character.

At the very moment that the widow was dashing headlong, with unknown intentions, after her learned son, from some where above there rang out a sonorous and cheerful:

"Hey! Hur-r-r-ah! Don't beat him! don't beat him! don't beat him!" The spectators of this scene glanced about them in the direction whence this shout proceeded, and beheld upon the dove-cote of one of the neighbouring houses, a tatterdemalion, who was holding in his hand the slender rod, with which

fanciers interested in pigeon-flying usually startle tumbler-pigeons. This shouter was the Stáry Górod town-crier, factotum and member of the proletariat, the vagrant commoner, known as commissioner Danílka. At that moment he was engaged in stirring up his tumbler-pigeons, and, simply for the sake of amusement, he could not let slip the opportunity to frighten the teacher also. Commissioner Danílka attained his object to his entire satisfaction, for no sooner had Prepótensky heard his warning cry, than he instantly changed his pace, and dashed forward with the swiftness of a deer.

Varnáva galloped rapidly down the deserted street, and along with him, in various directions, galloped, skipped and flew the bones, which had been laid out on the flat tray; but instead of escaping from one catastrophe, they were hastening to meet another, incomparably more dangerous: at the next street-crossing there loomed up before the terror-filled eyes of schoolmaster Varnáva the terror-inspiring deacon Akhílla, in far greater than his wonted stature.

As the proverb puts it—he had leaped from the frying-pan into the fire.

CHAPTER XVII

NO sooner did the poor schoolmaster espy Akhílla than his legs gave way beneath him, and came to a stand-still; but in another moment, they began to quiver like a tensely-strained spring, and in three mighty bounds carried Varnáva over a distance such as a man in a tranquil frame of mind could not have covered in ten. This almost saved Varnáva: he now found himself directly under the window of Madame Biziúkhin, the excise official's wife, and to his great good fortune, that learned lady herself was standing at the open window.

"Take this!" the panting Prepótensky cried to her: "spies and the priesthood are in pursuit of me!" and thereupon, he thrust into the window his tray with the bones, but was so weakened that he could not move another step, and leaned up against the wall, where Akhílla appeared by his side immediately afterwards, and, also puffing and panting, grasped him by the arm.

The deacon and teacher resembled two friends, who had just been indulging in a game of tag, and were now resting. There was not the slightest ill-will on the deacon's face: he looked merry, rather than otherwise. Breathing heavily, and rolling his eyes about him, he espied two human ribs sticking up in the middle of the road, and turning to Prepótensky, he said to him:

"Why don't you pick up those astragaluses of yours?"

"You go away, and then I'll pick them up."

"Very good: I'll go away," said the deacon, with his innate simplicity and frankness, stepped up to the window, raised himself on tiptoe, and having glanced into the room, remarked:

"Listen, Councilloress, really, there's no use in your standing up for this teacher."

But instead of the anticipated reply from the "councilloress," the liberal-minded excise official Biziúkhin himself presented himself to Akhilla, and displayed to him the naked skull of the skeleton.

"Hearken to me—put that out of sight, if you please, or I shall get angry," requested Akhilla politely; but in place of a reply, the most insulting laughter rang out from the house, and the excise man himself, as he stood at the window, began, laughing the while, to rattle the skeleton's jaws loudly at Akhilla.

"I'll kill you, you heretics!" roared Akhilla, and seized in both hands, a huge cobblestone which lay at the underpinning of the house, with the inflexible intention of hurling this two-hundred-and-forty-pound bomb at his insulters; but just as, with flashing eyes, he was preparing to throw the uplifted block of stone, some one clasped his arm from behind, and a familiar voice said, authoritatively:

"Drop it!"

It was Tuberózoff's voice. Archpriest Savély was standing there, stern and quivering with wrath and lack of breath. Akhilla obeyed him; he flashed his eyes, red with fury, at the excise officer, and flung aside the stone with such force that it penetrated for nearly two inches into the ground.

"Go home," whispered Father Savély to him, as he withdrew himself.

Akhilla did not reply, and immediately set out homewards, quietly and in a state of confusion, like a good-tempered schoolboy, who had been caught in mischief.

"O heavens! What a stupid and vexatious affair!" ejaculated Tuberózoff, hardly able to draw his breath, when his recent companion, Daryánoff, came alongside.

"Don't worry: nothing will come of it."

"Nothing will come of it? This will come of it, that Akhilla will be arrested! Didn't you hear what he roared out

as he threatened with the stone? He wanted to murder them all!"

"Well, you'll see that all this will end in nothing worse than laughter."

"No, sir; it will not end in laughter, and it's no laughing matter, but a piece of folly of which good-for-nothing people may avail themselves."

And the archpriest, hastening his steps, walked briskly homeward, describing angry S-es with the tip of his walking-stick.

In the next part of our Chronicle we shall see what consequences resulted from all this, and which of the two prophets was correct in his predictions.

PART TWO

CHAPTER I

THE morning following the night which ended the feast-day of St. Methody of Pesnoshsk promised a fair and tranquil day. It might even have been expected that it would prove tranquil in every respect: both as to the elements of nature, and as to the hearts of the people of Stáry Górod whose acquaintance we have made in the first part of this Chronicle. This, also, was the conviction of the archpriest. His fatigue of the preceding day had done him a good turn: he had slept soundly, had had peaceful dreams, and when he awoke in the morning, he reasoned with himself that all his anxiety of the day before had been, in all probability, quite unfounded; that perhaps the Lord would cause this little cloud to drift past, as He had already dispersed many another cloud, from which no one had suffered in any way.

"Yes, we are not a malicious, but a kindly folk," meditated the old man, as he went forth, in perfect peace of mind, to celebrate the early mass for that non-malicious but kindly folk. But this calm was deceptive: beneath the tranquil surface of the water a crocodile lay dozing in the depths.

Tuberózoff, having celebrated the mass and returned to his home, drank tea as he sat on that same divan upon which he slept at night, and at the same table at which he had penned his "Notes." The mother archpriestess only waited upon her husband: she handed him a glass of tea and a small silver plate, upon which priest Savély carefully deposited the altar-bread which he had brought in his pocket.

Tenderhearted Natálya Nikoláevna guarded her husband's repose, and tended him, fearful of disturbing his austere thoughts by any question whatsoever. In a whisper, she bade the maid fill both her husband's pipes with short-cut Rus-

sian tobacco, and place them in the corner on a small tray, and propping her chin on her hand, she waited for her husband to finish his first glass of tea, and ask for a second.

But before the time for this request arrived, her attention was diverted by an unusual noise, which arose not far from their house. Hurried footsteps, and confused conversation became audible, and a moment later the conversation changed into a loud shout. The archpriestess looked out of the window of her bedroom and saw that the noise and shouting proceeded from a crowd of people who were advancing at a very rapid pace, and, moreover, were directing their course straight toward their house. As they walked, they were jostling one another, flourishing their arms, and wrangling, sometimes seeming to hang back, and again seeming to advance almost at a run.

"What can it mean?" thought the archpriestess, and going into the parlour, she said to her husband:

"See, Father Savély, there appears to be a great mob of men coming."

"A good deal of a mob, but no men," replied Savély quietly.

"No, but really, do look out: there is a great crowd."

"The Lord be with them, let them walk about if they like; but do you give me another glass of tea."

The archpriestess took the glass, filled it with fresh tea, and having handed it to her husband, went again to the window, but the noisy group of men was no longer there. In place of that entire assembly there were only three or four men, and they were standing apart from one another, and gazing, with obvious perplexity and agitation, at Tuberózoff's house.

"O Lord, can it be that we are on fire anywhere, Father Savély!" cried the archpriestess, rushing into her husband's room; but she instantly came to a standstill on the threshold, and understood what the matter was.

In her yard the archpriestess beheld Deacon Akhilla, who was flying along with the wide sleeves of his cassock fluttering

abroad, and dragging after him by the ear Commissioner Danílka.

The archpriestess called her husband's attention to this, but before the archpriest could rise from his seat, the door of the anteroom burst open with a bang, and Akhílla made his appearance, in the parlour of the archpriest's house, leading directly behind him by the ear the flushed and abashed Commissioner Danílka.

"Father Archpriest," began Akhílla, letting go of Danílka, and presenting his hands to Tuberózoff for a blessing.¹

Savély bestowed his blessing.

Danílka approached after Akhílla, and also accepted a blessing. Then the deacon dragged the burgher a couple of paces backward, and again grasping him firmly by the ear, he began:

"Father Savély, just fancy: as I was walking down the street, I suddenly heard talking. The burghers were discussing the rain that was sent last night after the Prayer-service, and this fellow" (Akhílla thrust the forefinger of his left hand almost into the very nose of the blinking Danílka) "denied it."

Tuberózoff raised his head.

"Just fancy," began the deacon again, giving Danílka a jerk, "he said that the rain which fell last night, after the public Prayer-service for rain yesterday, did not come, in the least, because of the prayers."

"How do you know that?" inquired Tuberózoff drily.

The disconcerted Danílka made no reply.

"Just fancy, Father Archpriest! And he said," pursued the deacon, "that the rain was poured forth merely by the powers of Nature."

¹ It is customary for the person who approaches a priest for his blessing, to extend his hands, placed together somewhat in the attitude of prayer, but with the thumbs flat. The priest lays his hand upon these folded hands, after making the sign of the cross and uttering the words of blessing, and the recipient raises the hand to his lips and kisses it. TRANSLATOR.

"Why did you reason thus?" said Father Tuberózoff between his teeth, as he sucked up the crumbs of the altar-bread from his palm with his breath.

"Because of doubt, Father Archpriest," replied Danílka bashfully.

"Neither doubt nor self-conceit are at all fitting for you, you downright ignoramus, and therefore you are the worthy author of your own punishment, and have received exactly according to your deserts. And so, you babbler, begone from my house."

Having escorted the heretical Danílka to his threshold, the archpriest resumed his seat with dignity, finished his tea in silence, and only when all this was punctually accomplished did he say to deacon Akhílla:

"And as for you, Father Deacon, do you intend to go on raging like this much longer?"

"I couldn't bear it, Father Archpriest, for I have long wanted to inform you how he—just fancy it!—says every sort of thing against divinity and the scriptures: but I have been forbearing with him hitherto, over all this, because of his stupidity."

"Yes; when you ought not to have been forbearing."

"By heaven, I was! but when I heard him begin about the rites. . . ."

"Yes; and what did you do then?"

The archpriest smiled.

"Well, I simply couldn't endure it."

"Yes, and so you had to fight with him in public?"

"And what if it was in public, Father Archpriest? I minister at the altar, and am bound to defend the faith everywhere. Holy Nicholas, the saint, gave Arius a good drubbing in public, you know. . . ."

"That was Saint Nicholas, but this is you," Tuberózoff interrupted him. "Just understand, will you, you rook, that like a rook you ought to know your place, and not meddle in what does not concern you. What were you brandishing your stick for? You evidently have forgotten that a stick has two ends? You always rely upon your strength, you dromedary!"

"Yes, I do."

"You do? Well, then, don't! It isn't your strength that has saved you, but this—this is what has saved you," ejaculated the archpriest, pulling the deacon by the sleeve of his cassock.

"You don't mean to reproach me with that, Father Archpriest? Surely, I respect my profession."

"What! You respect your profession?" With these words, the archpriest advanced a step towards the deacon, and slapping his knee with his palm, he whispered:

"And don't you know, Father Deacon, who it is that sits in the grocer's shop, and smokes cigarettes with the shopmen?"

The deacon was dumbfounded, and began to trumpet out:

"Why, really, Father Archpriest, I am guilty of that, but that's nothing more than imprudence, Father Archpriest, by heaven, nothing more than imprudence."

"As much as to say, 'just see what a dandified deacon we have—how well he sucks his cigarettes!'"

"No, truly, Father Archpriest, just fancy, it isn't for that reason at all. What is there for me to brag about in that? You know, I'm not the only one of the clergy who occupies himself with that imprudence as to tobacco."

Tuberózoff measured the deacon from head to foot with the most significant sort of a glance, and tossing back his head, he asked him:

"What do you intend to say by that? Do you intend to intimate—'You smoke yourself, archpriest?'"

The deacon was overwhelmed with confusion, and made no reply.

Tuberózoff pointed to the corner of the room, where his three cherry-wood pipes stood, and said:

"What do I smoke, Father Deacon?"

The deacon remained silent.

"Be so good as to tell me what I smoke? Do I smoke a pipe?"

"Yes, you smoke a pipe," answered the deacon.

"—A pipe? Excellent! Where do I smoke it? Do I smoke it at home?"

"Yes, you do."

"Sometimes I smoke in the presence of guests, my good friends."

"You smoke in the presence of guests."

"But I do not smoke in shops, with the shopmen, sir!" cried Tuberózoff, throwing his body backward, and impressively tapping his palm with one finger, he added:— "Go to your place, and look to yourself. I have restrained you many, many times, but now—look out: a new order of things is coming in, a new court is being established, and different customs will be set up, and nothing will be in the shadow, but everything will be out in the plain daylight—and then I shall not be able to shield you."

Thereupon, the archpriest set his huge foot on a straw-bottomed chair, and with careful hand began to take down the little yellow cage of the canary.

"Phew! O merciful Lord! I have stood up for the faith, and again I have blundered!" said Akhílla to himself: and quitting the archpriest's house, he betook himself, with hurried strides, to a little, yellow house, from whose open windows peeped forth a perfect throng of little, blond children's heads.

The deacon hastily ascended the steps of this tiny house, then, from the porch, proceeded to the ante-room, and banging his forehead against the cross-beam, opened the door into a low-ceiled parlour.

To and fro in this parlour, with his hands clasped behind him, paced the dried-up, miniature Father Zakháriya, clad in his under-cassock, with a long silver chain on his hollow chest. Akhílla entered Father Zakháriya's house with quite a different aspect and tread from those with which he had entered the father archpriest's. The agitation with which the deacon had departed from Tuberózoff vanished in proportion as he approached Father Zakháriya's, and on the very threshold was replaced by extreme placidity. From sheer impatience, the deacon began at the very threshold:

"Well, Father Zakháriya! Well . . . my nice, little brother . . . Well!"

"What's the matter?" asked Father Zakháriya, with a gentle smile: "what makes you so lively?" and thereupon, without waiting for a reply, the little priest resumed his march.

The deacon, first of all, laughed merrily, and then exclaimed:

"O, my friend, what a dressing-down I've just had! O, Father, my head fairly aches with it. Do order them to give me a little restorer, as quickly as possible."

"A restorer? Very well. But who has been reprimanding you?"

"Why, the Minister of Justice, of course."

"Aha! Father Savély."

"Who else! The affair was remarkable in its beginning, Father Zakháriya, and remarkable in its ending, I tried to earn his good will, but he kept putting me to confusion, turned away his face from me, heaven knows where, and poured out something or other, which, if you were to kill me, I couldn't understand now, and can't repeat."

Nevertheless, the deacon, having seated himself and drunk the wineglass of vodka which was served to him on a plate, repeated to Father Zakháriya, in the most minute details, his entire affair with Danílka, and with Father Tuberózoff. Zakháriya, during the whole of this narration, continued to walk back and forth, with the same skipping gait, only pausing for a second, now and then, to sweep from his path now one and now another of the little blond heads, which kept popping up all over the room, and when the deacon had completely finished—then, biting the tip of his beard between his lips, at the very last word, he dropped an impressive:

"Yes, sir, yes, yes, yes, but that's nothing."

"I no longer think that he was angry, and yet. . . ."

"Yes, and yet—what? . . . Away with you, you little rogues!—Well, and what more?" inquired Zakháriya, pushing the children out of his way.

"And still, I was so impolitic at the time as to allude to the pipes," explained the deacon.

"Yes, well, certainly . . . of course . . . that might account

for it, in part. . . . Get out of the way, you little rascals! . . . However, we may assume that he is not displeased with you. Yes, it certainly is true, that it is not with you he is displeased."

"Well, and so I say too—that it's not with me—why should he be displeased with me? You know I am unfeignedly devoted to him."

"Yes—it's not with you: I assume . . . that he . . . Come, now, you little rogues, *will* you get out of my way!—In his soul—you understand. . . ."

"He is pained," said the deacon.

Father Zakhárya waved his hand in front of his breast, and remarked, as his face assumed a wry grimace:

"He is disturbed."

"Wounded," said deacon Akhílla with decision,—*"I know: schoolmaster Varnávka is still angering him—well, and I'll soon settle Varnávka, and so forth and so forth."*

And thereupon, the deacon took leave of Father Zakhárya, without explaining himself in detail, and went away.

As Akhílla wended his way homeward, he met Danílka, stopped him and said:

"Please don't be angry with me, brother Danílka. If I have chastized you, I have done it entirely because of my Christian duty."

"You have disgraced me publicly, Father Deacon," replied Danílka in an offended tone, which nevertheless, contained a touch of inclination to be reconciled.

"Well, and what are you going to do with me now for insulting you? I know I have done it, but when am I severe? I wasn't insolent about it, you know; and you know, that last year, when you put on Father Savély's chasuble in the Commissioner of Police's ante-room, and sprinkled with the aspergillus, I said to you: 'Argue as you like about the Scriptures, Danílka,—I don't know much about science myself—but don't meddle with the rites.'—Come now, did I say that to you, or did I not? I said—'Don't meddle with the rites, Danílka.'"

Danílka reluctantly nodded his head, and grunted out:

"Perhaps you did say it."

"No, my dear fellow, don't dodge, but confess that I certainly did say it: I said—'don't meddle with the rites, that's all!' And why did I say it? Because that is our vital principle, our very being, and so don't you meddle with it! Do you understand that now?"

Danílka only turned aside, and smiled: he himself had found it deadly funny that the deacon should lead him through the streets by the ear, but others—several common citizens, who were present,—in jest, and with difficulty restraining their laughter, reproached the deacon with excessive severity.

"Yes, you are severe, sir, Father Deacon! You are beyond measure severe," they said to him.

Akhílla, on hearing this remark, paused to reflect, and with a virtuous sigh, he laid his hands on the shoulders of the two citizens who stood nearest him and said:

"I am severe, you say. Yes, I really am severe,—you're right about that; but, on the other hand, I am just. But what if I had carried the case to the justice of the peace?—It could have been a great deal worse.— He would immediately have fined you three rubles, for the benefit of the children's asylums."

"That's all right, sir: some justices of the peace would give a ruble-tip for tea for that sort of thing."

"Well, there you see! Yes, my good fellow, I know that I am just."

"Why talk about justice? God knows that you're not just, Father Deacon."

"Why so?"

"Because—is Danílka much to blame for merely repeating what a learned man had said to him? If you judge justly, the person you really ought to bring to his senses is Varnáva Vasílich, because it was he who told us that, while Danílka only had his doubts that it might be so, as the teacher said, that the rain came in the nature of things, and not because of the Prayer-service. Now, if you were to give the teacher a good shaking, that really would be lawful."

“The teacher?”— The deacon flung his arms wide apart, thrust both his lips up to his nose like a trumpet, and after standing thus for a moment, before the citizens, he whispered: “Lawful! The law, I know, commands. . . . Father Savély does not command in this case—and it is impossible!”

CHAPTER II

SEVERAL days passed: Tuberózoff became convinced that his fears that the ungovernable deeds of Deacon Akhilla would entail serious complications in the courts, were unfounded; everything was going on joyfully in the old way; people were diversifying the monotony of provincial life by quarrelling in order to become reconciled, and becoming reconciled in order to quarrel again. Nothing menaced the peace; on the contrary, even to Tuberózoff there was sent down from above a very fine day, which he spent in the purest ecstasy. It was the Name-day of the Police Commissioner's wife, which fell soon after the day on which Akhilla, in his zeal for the faith, had created a public scandal with Commissioner Danílka. When all the guests who were assembled to eat the Commissioner's wife's meat-pie, were busy satisfying their appetite, the host,—happening to approach the window—suddenly shouted loudly to his wife: "My heavens! Just look here, wife, what guests are coming to you!"

"Who are they,—who?" replied his wife.

"Just look for yourself."

The heroine of the feast, accompanied by every one in the room, rushed to the windows from which was visible a huge *tróika* of big bay horses, cautiously descending the hill, like a three-headed serpent crawling on its belly. The shaft-horse was holding back and planting his feet securely, like an old general on his way to give some one a blowing-up: first he would bite his lip on the right side, then on the left side, then shake his head, and again paw and paw with his hoofs; the side-horses were now winding in and out, like cornets of Uhlans in search of their *vis-à-vis*, then again, drawing themselves up into balls, like entangled sheep: the little bell,

decorated in raspberry-crimson, at the peak of the shaft-arch, would bang about noisily, like a small ring, along its edge, and again get caught fast, and fall silent; only the sleigh-bells on the harness tinkled dully, and without any jingle. But now the triole-headed serpent crawled down and spread itself out; the backs of the horses became visible, a side-horse flourished his tail in the air; his mane floated in the breeze; the tróika reached the level ground, and drove upon the bridge. The gilded shaft-arch, with its etched pattern, and a huge, antique tróika-carriage of the guitar-pattern, with bronze mountings, became visible. In the carriage, side by side, as people sit in *tête-à-tête* chairs, sat two tiny persons: one a man, the other a woman; the man was dressed in a dark-green camelot cloak, and a large cap of long-napped beaver such as it used for hats, while the woman wore a dark, purplish-raspberry hued coat with sleeves, of *gros de Naples*, with a lilac velvet collar, and a cap with cinamon-brown ribbons.

"Heavens! 'tis the Plodomásoffs' dwarfs!— It cannot be! —Look for yourself!— It is, it really is!— Certainly it is; there now, Nikolái Afanásitch has caught sight of us, you see, and is bowing; and there's Márya Afanásievna nodding also."

Such were the exclamations which rang out on all sides, at the sight of the dwarfs, and every one was delighted, without appearing to know why: the host and hostess busied themselves with having fresh luncheon prepared for the new arrivals, and the guests already present gazed attentively towards the door through which the little people must enter, and, at last, they made their appearance.

In front came the little old man, not much larger than a boy eight years of age; the little old woman, who was slightly larger, followed.

The old man was the personification of neatness and good sense: his countenance showed not the slightest trace of the yellow spots and wrinkles which usually disfigure the faces of dwarfs: his figure was very well proportioned, his little head was as round as a ball, and covered with perfectly white,

closely-clipped hair, and his eyes were small, light-brown and resembled those of a bear. The woman-dwarf had none of her brother's attractiveness: she was rather bloated, and had a stupid, sensual mouth, and dull eyes.

In spite of the fact that it was the hot season of the year, the dwarf Nikolái Afanásievitch wore warm, plush shoes, black trousers of shaggy frieze, a yellow flannel waistcoat, and a light-brown, swallow-tailed coat, with metal buttons. His linen was immaculately clean, and his little cheeks were firmly supported by a tall satin stock. The woman was dressed in a green silk loose gown, with a large lace cape. As Nikolái Afanásievitch entered the room, he placed his tiny hands on the seams of his trousers, then raised his right hand, which held his cap, to his heart, scraped one tiny foot against the other tiny foot, and wending his way, swaying as he walked, straight to the hostess, he said in a gentle, and even, elderly voice:

"Our master, Nikíta Alexyévitsh Plodomásoff and Mr. Parmén Semyónovitch Tugánoff have deigned to command us, their servants, on their own behalf, and on that of their wives, to bring to you, madam, Olga Arséntievna, their congratulations.— Sister, repeat," he said, addressing his sister, who stood beside him, and when she had finished her congratulations, Nikolái Afanásievitch made a bow and a scrape to the Commissioner of Police and continued:

"And to you, sir, Vóin Vasílievitch, and all the honourable company, along with the hostess. And next, sir, I have the honour to announce that, in sending my sister and myself to bring you their congratulations, my master and Parmén Semyónovitch beg to be excused for our serf-embassy; but they, themselves, are not free at this moment, and will present their excuses to you this evening."

"Parmén Semyónovitch is coming here?" exclaimed the Commissioner of Police.

"Yes, together with my master, Nikíta Alexyévitsh Plodomásoff, on their way to St. Petersburg, and they beg that you will pardon them for calling in their travelling garb."

A little bustle arose among the company at this bit of news, and the dwarf, taking advantage of it, went to ask Tuberózoff's blessing, and said softly:

"Parmén Semyónovitch requests that you will be here this evening."

"Tell him I will, my dear fellow," replied Tuberózoff.

The dwarf also accepted Zakháriya's blessing. Deacon Akhílla took the hand of the little man, who made him a respectful reverence, saying, with a smile, as he did so:

"Only, please do me the favour, sir, not to test your epic-hero strength on me!"

"Why, Nikolái Afanásievitch, do you mean to say that he is pretty robust?" jested the host.

"He's very fond of exercising his strength, sir," replied the little old man. "And on whom will it be now? On a cripple."

"And how is your health, Nikolái Afanásievitch?" the ladies asked the dwarf, as they thronged around him, and shook his tiny hands.

"My health, indeed, ladies! It is absurd to answer: I have become just like a little sucking-pig. Here it is, almost St. Peter and St. Paul's Day and I am still fairly frozen."

"You are frozen?"

"Certainly, madam: here you can judge, for I'm all sewed up in a hare-skin bag. And what is there to be surprised at, gentlemen? This useless man has already completed his eightieth year."

They vied with one another in showering Nikolái Afanásievitch with questions, on various subjects, they made him sit down, and they offered him everything: he replied to all the questions cleverly and with ready wit, but refused all refreshments, saying that, for a long time past, he had been accustomed to eat very little, and then only some light vegetable.

"But my sister eats things," he said, turning toward her. "Sit down, sister, eat, eat! Why do you stand on ceremony? And if you will not eat without me, then permit me, madam, Olga Arséntievna, to have some of the chopped carrot from

your meat-pasty, on a plate. . . . That's it, enough, madam, that is plenty! . . . Now, dear sister, eat, but I have had enough. It is not worth while to feed me any longer; I used to be able to knit thread stockings, but I can no longer do even that properly. I used to knit much better than my sister, and I even did English embroidery, but now, whenever I try to knit, I am continually dropping stitches."

"Yes, you did use to knit splendidly," replied Tuberózoff, who had grown very animated and cheerful with the arrival of the dwarf.

"Ah, Father Savély! Time, sir, time!" the dwarf smiled, and added, jestingly: "and, moreover, there's no one to be strict with me now-a-days; I have grown spoiled since the death of my benefactress. What? Hospitality always ready, blood warm, and I always get lazy."

The archpriest gazed, with a happy smile, into the dwarf's eyes, and said:

"I see you, Nikolái, I see you before me like a sweet, old fairy-tale, with which I should like to die."

"But Father, the fairy-tale has died before us."

"But are you forgetting your mistress, Nikoláša? Do you forget your Boyárin Márfa Andréevna?" asked deacon Akhílla fidgeting about the dwarf, while Nikolái Afanásievitch seemed to be incessantly afraid of him, and ever on his guard against him.

"I'm too old to forget, sir, Father Deacon; I have long been making ready to go to her, my comforter, and serve her again in the next world," replied the dwarf very softly, and only turning very slightly in the direction of Akhílla.

"She was very comforting, was that old lady, they say," remarked the deacon, addressing himself impartially to the whole assembly.

"In what sense do you mean that?" inquired Tuberózoff.

"She was amusing."

The archpriest smiled and waved his hand, but Nikolái Afanásievitch corrected Akhílla, saying firmly to him:

"She was comforting, sir, *comforting*, not amusing."

"Why do you attempt to instruct him, Nikolái? You'd much better tell us how she embittered you? How she made that document, that purchase," counselled the archpriest.

"Why, Father Archpriest, that's an old story, sir."

"It is very affecting when he narrates how obdurate he was," said Tuberózoff to those present.

"And Father, how well she, my mistress, knew how to embitter a man, and how to comfort him, and she embittered and comforted as only one of the angels of the Lord can comfort," replied the dwarf instantly. "She would penetrate into the very most secret place of a man's soul, and comfort him, and achieve the greatest bliss on earth with the beck of her hand."

"Now, really, you must tell us!"

"Very well, my dear sirs, whether you are laughing or not, or are really interested to hear about this, still, if all the company wishes to hear it, I dare not disobey, and I will tell you."

"Please do, Nikolái Afanásievitch!"

"I will," replied the dwarf, smiling, "I will, because this tale is even agreeable." And with these words, the dwarf began:

CHAPTER III

“IT was not more than a year after she bought me from my former masters. I had passed that year in terrible sadness, because I had been torn away, you know, from my blood-relatives, and from my family. Of course, I never let any one see that I was sad, lest they should report it to the lady, or lest she should notice it herself; but all this precaution was vain, for my late mistress divined it all. My Name-day was approaching, and she deigned to say:

“‘What gift shall I make you, Nikolái?’

“‘Mátushka,’ said I, ‘why should you make me any more gifts? As it is, I am content with everything, beyond measure content.’

“‘No,’ she replied, ‘I am thinking of giving you at least a ruble.’

“Well, I did not dare refuse, and so I kissed her hand, and said:

“‘I am loaded down with your many beneficences,’ said I, and I sat down again to knit stockings. I had good eyes in those days, and even knit stockings for my master Alexyéi Nikítitch, who served in the Guards. And as I knit away at my stockings, sir, I began to weep. God knows why I wept—it was just because I remembered something about my relatives, you know, in connection with the approaching day of my Angel, and so I fell to weeping. But Márfa Andréevna saw it, because I always sat on a foot-bench opposite her armchair, to knit, and she asked:

“‘Why are you weeping, Nikolái?’ she condescended to say.

“‘Because I can’t help it, *mátushka*,’ I answered, ‘the tears just came of themselves. . . .’ and I didn’t know what to say to her about my crying. I rose, kissed her hand, and sat down again on my bench.

“Please do not direct your glances at this weakness, madam,” I said. “I just shed these tears because I am foolish.”

“And again we sat and worked; I was knitting a stocking, and she deigned to knit a stocking also. But, all of a sudden, she knit off, . . . and then she asked:

“And what will you do, Nikolái, with the ruble I mean to give you tomorrow?”

“I shall send it to my daddy when I have a safe opportunity, madam,” said I.

“And what if I give you two rubles?” said she.

“I shall send the other to my mammy,” I announced.

“And if I give you three?”

“I’ll send the third to my brother Iván Afanásievitch,” said I.

“She shook her head, and said:

“You will need a great deal of money, my dear fellow, to give them all a share! you are such a little creature, that you will never earn it.”

“It has pleased the Lord to make me so,” I said, and with these words I fell a-weeping once more; my heart contracted again, you know: and I was angry at my tears, but I went on weeping. And she, my late mistress, gazed at me, and silently beckoned me to her with one finger: I fell at her feet, and she laid my head on her knees, and I went on weeping, and she deigned to weep also. Then she rose, and said:

“Do you never murmur against God, Nikolásha?”

“How can one murmur against God, *matushka*,” said I. “I never murmur.”

“Well, and He will comfort you for that,” she said. And as she said that, she rose, bade me order them to send the estate-bailiff Deméntiy to her in her lower dressing-room, and went thither herself.

“Don’t cry, Nikolásha,” she said. “The Lord will comfort you.”

“And, of a truth, He did comfort me.”

Here Nikolái Afanásievitch blinked suddenly with his thin eyelids, and springing quickly from his chair, he ran into a

corner, where he wiped his eyes with a white handkerchief, after which, with a shamefaced smile, he returned to his place. After he resumed his seat, he began again, in an entirely different, solemn voice, which had very little in common with his former tone:

"I rose early, gentlemen: I slipped out softly (for I slept on a rug, behind a screen, at Márfa Andréevna's feet), and went to the church to get Father Alexyéi to celebrate a Prayer-Service after Matins. I entered the church, sir, and went straight to the sanctuary, in order to receive Father Alexyéi's blessing, and I saw that the expression on the late Father Alexyéi's face was unusually joyful, for some reason, and he congratulated me, in a whisper, on my joy. Of course, I interpreted this as applying to my Name-day. But what followed, my dear sir! I went out with an altar-bread on the left side of the chancel-platform, because I was in the habit of singing along with chanter Evfímitch, in the left choir, with my thin little voice. Suddenly I espied my mammy in the congregation, and my daddy, and my big brother Iván Afanásievitch. I could not see my father and mother very well among the people, but my big brother Iván Afanásievitch was the sort of person who is a regular huge guardsman of a fellow, so that I saw him at once. I thought it was a vision! For I had wanted very much to see them on that day. No, it was not a vision! I saw my mammy—she was a peasant—and she was overcome, and was crying. Surely, I thought, they must have got permission of their masters, and come this long distance to see their child. Of course, I did not disturb the decorum of church; I merely went to my relatives, and made them reverences to the girdle, and then went away again very quickly,¹ into the sanctuary, and I no longer sang. . . . For I must say, positively—that I could not, sir!— Well, sir, and

¹ It is not improper to move about, quietly, in Russian churches, if the congregation is not too densely packed to permit it. All stand; and those who wish to place candles before any of the holy pictures, (ikóni) walk forward and do so. Quiet greetings, bows and handshakes are perfectly proper. TRANSLATOR.

so Matins and the Mass ended, according to the rite, as was fitting, and then . . . I'm only afraid that these foolish tears will interfere again with my story," said Nikolái Afanásievitch, as he hastily mopped his eyes with his handkerchief. "I went out of the sanctuary after the Mass was over, sir, to have the priest celebrate the Prayer-service to my order, and there, I beheld Márfa Andréevna herself standing in front of the folding-desk with the holy picture, for she had come to the Mass; and directly behind her stood my sister Márya Afanásievna, whom you see before you, and my parents, and my big brother. They began to sing, 'O, holy Father Nikolái,' when suddenly Father Alexyéi mentioned all my family in prayer. I was greatly touched by this, gentlemen; I had paid Father Alexyéi what I could, according to my means, although he had not wished to take anything, but one cannot pray for nothing, and I went up to Márfa Andréevna, to congratulate her. But she pushed me away from her gently, with her hand and said:

"'Go first and make your reverence to your parents!'

"I saluted my father and my mother, and my big brother, weeping all the while. My sister, Márya Afanásievna here," (Nikolái Afanásievitch pointed to his sister with an affectionate smile) "did not cry at all, because she has a better disposition, but I am weak, and I weep. Then, dear Father Priest, we went out on the steps, and my mistress, Márfa Andréevna, takes from her reticule a little, jug-shaped purse, and I had even seen her knitting it, though I did not know, of course, for whom she intended it.

"'Make your gifts to your family, Nikolásha,' she said to me. I began to make my gifts: A silver ruble to my daddy, a ruble to my mammy, a ruble to my big brother Iván Afanásievitch—and they were all new rubles; and still there remain four rubles in the purse.

"'And how do you command me to use these, *mátushka*?' And behold, Deméntiy the bailiff, leads up to me my sister-in-law with her three small children, all in half-fitting short over-

coats. I gave them all gifts, through her great kindness, and we all walked home from church together: my late mistress, and Father Alexyéi, and I, and sister Márya Afanásievna, and my parents, and all my brother's children. Again sister Márya Afanásievna went along sensibly, not affected, but I, stupid creature, wept like a river, without myself being able to say why. Nevertheless, my dear sir, although I continued to weep, I walked on: but then, my dear sir, at the porch of the manor-house, I suddenly looked, and behold—there stood three carts harnessed to Márfa Andréevna's own post-horses, and with my brother's two horses hitched on behind, and in the carts I saw all the baggage of my parents and my brother. I was disconcerted at this, and knew not what to think. Márfa Andréevna, who had been walking with Father Alexyéi up to that moment, had been discussing the mowing, and had appeared to be paying no attention to me, but then, of a sudden, as she felt her feet on the porch, she turned to me, and deigned to utter these words:— 'Here, my servant, is a certificate of freedom for you; set your old folks, and your brother, and his children at liberty!' and she thrust the certificate of freedom into my waistcoat.—Well, this was more than I could bear. . . ."

Nikolái Afanásievitch raised his hands on a level with his face, and went on: "'Tis thou,' I cried wildly . . . 'so it is still thy doing, thou harsh one, who, apparently, wishest to crush me with thy goodness!' And then my breast collapsed, my temples began to throb, and little shrine-lamps seemed to be flitting all over the world, before my eyes, and I fell senseless beside my father's carts with the certificate of freedom."

"Akh, old man, you're very sensitive, aren't you?" exclaimed the deeply-moved Akhílla, slapping Nikolái Afanásievitch on the shoulder.

"Yes, sir," pursued the dwarf, wiping his little mouth; "and I did not come to myself until nine days later, because a fever had seized hold on me: and when I looked about me, I saw my mistress sitting by my bedside, and she said: 'Okh,

forgive me, Nikoláša for Christ's sake: I came near driving you mad!" And that's the sort of giantess Madam Plodomá-soff was!"

"Akh, what a dear of an old man you are!" exclaimed deacon Akhílla again, seizing Nikolái Afanásievitch jestingly by a button of his coat, and seeming to be about to wrench it off.

The dwarf silently tested the button, and having satisfied himself that it was intact and in its place, he said:

"Yes, sir, yes, I am an insignificant man, but she took thought for me, she trusted me; sometimes, even, she confided her troubles to me, especially when she was separated from Alexyéi Nikítitch, and was grieving. She would receive a letter, and would begin at once to run it through very fast to herself, and then she would read it all aloud. She would sit, and read, and I would stand in front of her knitting a stocking and listening. We would read it, and immediately enter into conversation. 'He ought to be promoted to the grade of officer soon, now,' she would say. And I would say: 'They certainly will promote him according to his ranking, *mátushka*.' Then she would deliberate, 'What think you, Nikoláša—I believe I ought to send him some more money.' 'Certainly, *mátushka*,' I answer, 'you ought, without fail to send him some more.' 'Exactly,' she said, 'you know money is next to useless to us here.' 'And what should we need it for, *mátushka*?' said I. But sister Márya Afanásievna, at that moment, suddenly got displeased, and said nothing, and immediately my late mistress got angry with her for that. 'You're a blockhead! Not without cause did they throw you in gratis when I bought your brother.'"

Suddenly Nikolái Afanásievitch stopped short, flushed violently red, and, turning to his dull-witted sister, he said:

"Will you forgive me, dear sister, for telling that?"

"Talk away, it's all right, talk away," replied Márya Afanásievna, rolling her tongue round in her cheek.

"My sister used to begin to cry," went on Nikolái Afanásievitch restored to composure, "and I would quietly lure

her out of Márfa Andréevna's sight into a corner, or on to the stairs, and exhort her. 'Calm yourself, sister. This is repaying kindness with unkindness.' And, in fact, my mistress's hot but overflowing heart would quickly quiet down. 'Marya!' she would call, a moment later. 'You've sulked long enough, my good woman. What makes you bristle your back up like a cat? Come, sit down here and work.' Are you sure you are not angry, sister?"

"Go on with your story, what does it matter to me? Go on," replied Márya Afanásievna.

"Yes, sir; and so that would be the end of the matter. My sister would take her stool, place it at our mistress's feet, and again begin to knit. Well, and as soon as tranquillity was restored I would approach Márfa Andréevna, and ask for her hand to kiss, and say, 'We thank you humbly, *mátushka!*' And immediately she would be moved to tears. 'You are my tender-hearted Nikóla,' she would say. 'Only, I cannot understand why we have such a wooden creature in her?' she would begin again, about my sister. And I," pursued Nikolái Afanásievitch, smiling, "would immediately lay this speech on the table—on the table, in secretary style. 'Sister,' I would whisper, 'dear sister, ask for her hand to kiss!' Márfa Andréevna would hear me, and immediately the affair was at an end. 'Sit still, my mother,' she would say to my sister, 'I don't want any of your kisses.' And we would make our knitting-needles fly furiously, all three of us. And all that could be heard was the *tri-ti-ti-ti*, *tri-ti-ti* of the needles, and the *sh-shee*, *sh-shee* of a fly flitting past. And in this sort of stillness we lived our whole life."

"Well, but didn't she set you and your sister at liberty?" asked some one, as the dwarf was about to rise, having finished his tale.

"At liberty? No, sir, she did not. My sister, Márya Afanásievna, was included in my parents' certificate of freedom, but she did not set me free. She used to say: 'After my death, live where you like,' (because she had provided me with a capital for a pension), 'but so long as I live, I will never give

you your liberty.' 'And there is no need for it,' I said, 'what is freedom to me, *mátushka*?' If I were free, the sparrows would peck me to death.'"

"Oh, what a little dear you are!" cried Akhílla, deeply touched.

"Why, what are you thinking of? Of course they would peck me to death, sir," affirmed Nikolái Afanásievitch. "There's our butler, Glyéb Stepánovitch—what a man he was! simply a beauty—and she set him at liberty, and he opened a hotel, and occupied himself with liquor, and now he wanders about the hotel-yard, and for two kopeks he exhibits himself to the merchants as 'the miserly knight.' That is not nice, is it?"

"He was her right-hand man in everything, was this Nikolái Afanásievitch," remarked Tuberózoff, who wished to exalt, by this praise, the services of the dwarf, and turn the conversation again to the desired topic.

"I served her, Father Archpriest, I served her to the best of my understanding. When the late lamented journeyed to Moscow or Petersburg she never took her maids with her. She could not endure female servants on the road. She was wont to say, 'all those Mílitrísa Kirbántievnas cackle and roam about the corridors in the hotels, and pick up acquaintances, but Nikolásha,' she said, 'sits as quietly as a hare in the corner of my room.' You see, she never regarded me as a man at all, but always as a hare."

Nikolái Afanásievitch laughed, and added:

"Yes, and really, what sort of a man am I when, if you will excuse me, it is impossible to buy either boots, or any man's clothing ready-made, because nothing fits me. So her words were really just,—that I am a hare."

"Coward! coward! coward!" said Akhílla, laughing, and stroking the dwarf's shoulders.

"But she didn't regard you as a hare when she wanted to marry you off?" remarked Police Commissioner Porókhontzeff.

"That happened, *bátiushka*, Vóin Vasilievitch. It happened sir," he added, lowering his voice—"it really did."

"It didn't, not really, Nikolái Afanásievitch?" cried several voices at once.

"It is a sin to lie—it did."

Every one present at once besought the dwarf: "Dear little Nikolái Afanásievitch, do tell us about it!"

"Akh, gentlemen, what can I tell you about that!" evaded Nikolái Afanásievitch, laughing, reddening, and warding off all questions with his hands.

They insisted importunately; the ladies grasped his hands, and kissed him on the brow: he caught the ladies' hands on the fly, as they touched him, and kissed them, but still refused the tale, for he considered it long and uninteresting. But suddenly something crashed down on the floor, and the hostess, who was standing, at the moment, in front of the dwarf's arm-chair, stepped aside, in alarm, and revealed to the eyes of Nikolái Afanásievitch deacon Akhílla, on his knees, with hands uplifted.

"Dearest!" rattled off Akhílla, very fast, as he rolled his head about, "Do tell us how they tried to marry you!"

"I'll tell you, I'll tell you everything, only get up, Father Deacon."

Akhílla rose, and brushing the dust from his cassock, proclaimed, in a self-satisfied tone:

"Aha! Well, now, sir? He said he would not tell! Why wouldn't he tell? I said to myself, 'I'll beg him until he does—and I've done it! Now, gentlemen, to your seats again, and see that you keep quiet; and do you, hostess, order a glass of water with red wine, such as is served in mansions, for Nikolásha, for what he is going to tell us.'"

All seated themselves. A glass of water was brought, for Nikolái Afanásievitch, who himself poured in a few drops of wine, and began a new tale about himself.

CHAPTER IV

“**I**T happened, gentlemen, soon after the French peace, when I conversed with the late Emperor, now asleep in the Lord.”

“You conversed with the Emperor?” several voices instantly interrupted the narrator.

“What are you thinking?” replied the dwarf, with a quiet smile. “Yes, sir, I spoke with the Emperor Alexánder Pávlovitch, and had sense enough to answer him.”

“Ha, ha, ha! May God strike me dead if we haven’t a regular rogue in this little Nikolávra!” suddenly roared deacon Akhílla with delight, and slapping his hands on his hips, he added: “Look at him!—he’s little, but nevertheless, he, that little flea of a man, has talked with the Tzar!”

“Sit down, deacon, be quiet, deacon,” ejaculated Tuberózoff calmly and impressively. Akhílla indicated with a gesture of his hands, that he would say no more, and sat down.

The narrative began again.

“It seemed even to take its beginning in that conversation of mine with the Emperor,” began Nikolái Afanásievitch quietly. “My mistress, Márfa Andréevna, had a desire to be in Moscow when the Emperor was expected there, after his All-glorious victory over Napoleon Bonaparte. Of course I was with her during that journey, by her will. My late mistress was then very aged, and because of her ill-health had become irascible and quick to take offence. The young master found our house tiresome on that account, and my late mistress saw this, and was greatly vexed over it, but was most angry of all with Alexyéi Nikítitch because he considered that the proper order of things was not established in her house, so that every one might be merry, and so, because of that, every

one forgot us. So Alexyéi Nikítitch got his mamma an invitation to the ball at which the Emperor was expected. Márfa Andréévna did not conceal from me that this afforded her great pleasure. She prepared a very costly toilet for the ball, and for me she ordered from a French tailor a blue coat of English cloth, with gold buttons, trousers—pardon me, ladies,—a waistcoat, a cravat—all white: there were ruffles on my cuffs, and buckles on my shoes, for which she paid forty-two rubles. Alexyéi Nikítitch had asked permission for his mother to take me there, to give his mamma pleasure. The major-domo was ordered to conduct me to the conservatory attached to the house, and place me among the flowers in some corner opposite the ball-room which the Emperor would enter. And thus, my dear sirs, all was done—but not quite. The major-domo placed me, you know, in a corner beside a large tree—a Chinese palm they called it—and said that I was to stay there and look at what I could see thence. But what could I see from there? Nothing. So, you know, like Zaccheus the Pharisee, I seized hold and climbed up the little artificial cliff and crawled along and stood under the palm. In the ballroom there was noise, glitter and music; but although I stood on the cliff under the palm-tree, still I could see nothing, except the crowns of the people's heads and their toupees. But suddenly, all those heads began to stir about wildly, moved aside, and the Emperor, with Prince Golítzyn, walked straight out of the heat into the conservatory. And, what is more, just fancy, he not only came into the conservatory, but even to that cool, distant corner where they had hidden me. I was fairly rooted to the spot, ladies. I was rooted to the cliff, and did not climb down."

"Were you frightened?" inquired Tuberózoff.

"What shall I say? I was not exactly frightened, but I was disconcerted."

"But I would have run away," said the deacon, unable to contain himself.

"Why should I run away, sir? I can't say that I was not

a drop frightened, but I did not run. And, meanwhile, His Majesty kept coming nearer, and nearer. I could hear his boots go, *squee, squee, squee*; and I could already see his face—such a tranquil, gracious face—and I was already thinking, you know, in my despair, yet I couldn't think why I should reveal myself to him, where he should see me? Only, all of a sudden, the Emperor turned his head, and I saw that he deigned to cast his eyes upon me, and fix them on me."

"Well!" exclaimed the deacon, turning pale.

"I took, and made him a bow."

The deacon sighed, and pressing the dwarf's hand, he whispered:

"Please tell us; be quick, don't stop!"

"He looked at me, and said to Prince Golitzyn in French: 'Aha, what a miniature copy! Whose is it?'—I saw that Prince Golitzyn was in difficulty what answer to make: so, as I can understand the French tongue, I replied myself, 'Madame Plodomásoff's, your Imperial Majesty!'—The Emperor turned to me, and deigned to inquire:

"Of what nation are you?"— 'The subject of your Imperial Majesty.'—'A native of Russia?' he asked, and again I replied: 'A peasant, your Imperial Majesty's subject.'

The Emperor burst out laughing. 'Bravo!' he was pleased to jest, 'bravo, *mon petit sujet fidèle*,' and he pressed my head against him with his hand."

Nikolái Afanásievitch dropped his voice, and added in a whisper, athwart a quiet smile, as though it were a very grave political secret:

"And, you know, he took me, and embraced me with his arm, and he crushed my nose very painfully with a button on his cuff, which he did not notice."

"And you didn't—cry out?" asked the deacon.

"No, sir, what are you thinking of, *bátiushka*? What are you thinking of? How could I cry out at the petting of the Emperor?—I kissed his hand, as soon as he released me," concluded Nikolái Afanásievitch, "because I was happy, and

had been accorded the honour, and all that conversation with His Majesty. And afterwards, of course when they took me down from under the palm-tree, and carried me home in the carriage, I cried all the while."

"Why did you cry afterwards?" asked Akhílla.

"Why do you ask? Wasn't that enough to make me, sir? One weeps when one's feelings are touched."

"He's little, but how deep his feelings are!" exclaimed Akhílla in rapture.

"Well permit me!" began the narrator again.—"Now, just as soon as the accidental favour of the Emperor was reported about Moscow in several houses, the late Márfa Andréevna began to take me about and exhibit me; and I, to tell you the truth, for I do not like to lie, was then the smallest dwarf in all Moscow. But that did not last long—only one winter."

But at this point, the deacon, without the slightest cause, suddenly snorted, and hanging his head over the back of his chair, half rose, and said:

"No, never mind me! Please go on with your story, Nik-clávra. I'm laughing at my own affairs.—About the way Count Klenýkhin spoke to me, one day."

"No, sir: you'd better speak out, sir, or you'll be interrupting again," replied the dwarf.

"Why, it's nothing, nothing; it was the simplest sort of thing," returned Akhílla. "Count Klenýkhin was inspecting our Seminary buildings. I made him a bow, and he said, 'Go away, you fool!' That was our entire conversation, and I was laughing at it."

"And it really was amusing," said Nikolái Afanásievitch, and then smilingly continued:

"The following winter, the wife of General Vikhióroff brought from Petersburg a little Finnish woman, Metta, a dwarf smaller by a finger, than myself. The late Márfa Andréevna could not bear to hear of that. At first she said that the woman was not a natural dwarf, but had been made to drink lead; but when she came and saw Metta Ivánovna, she got angry, because the woman was so white and perfect.

She began to dream, whenever she was asleep, how we might buy Metta Ivánovna, for ourselves. But Madam Vikhióroff would not hear of selling her. Then Márfa Andréevna explained, 'My Nikolái,' said she, 'is clever, and knew how to answer the Emperor, but your girl,' says she, 'is only good to look at.' And so the two ladies wrangled over us. Márfa Andréevna said to the other that she would not sell, and the other said that she must sell me. Suddenly, Márfa Andréevna flared up, 'I'm not bargaining with you to get her from you for a plaything, you know,' says she, 'I'm buying her for exportation as a bride, in order to marry Nikolái to her.'—Madam Vikhióroff says: 'Well, I'll marry him at my house,'—Márfa Andréevna says: 'I'll give you the children, if there should be any,' and the other also said that she would make a present of the children if there should be children. Márfa Andréevna waxed angry, and ordered me to say good-bye to Metta Ivánovna. And then, since Márfa Andréevna could not restrain herself, we went there again, and as soon as the other entered she announced: "Come, listen to me, *mátushka* Generaless, I'll give you a thousand rubles for your monster." And the other, just out of spite, did not put me to shame, but offered two thousand for me. Both went on raising, and raising, and raising their bids, and Márfa Andréevna, getting angry again, exclaimed: 'I don't sell my people, *mátushka!*' And Madame Vikhióroff replied that she, also, did not sell her people; and then Metta Ivánovna and I were again ordered to take leave of each other. They bid up to ten thousand rubles, for us, my dear sirs, and still the affair made no progress, because when my mistress offered ten thousand for the woman, the other offered eleven thousand for me. The matter dragged on in this way until spring, sirs, and I must tell you, that although Márfa Andréevna was lofty and invincible of spirit, and had held her own with Pugatchóff, and had danced with three Emperors, still Madame Vikhióroff broke down Márfa Andréevna's character dreadfully. She was bored! frightfully bored! And she began to be angry with me all the time, 'You're this-and-that sort of a lout,'

she deigned to say, 'to such an extent that you cannot even inspire the maid with a fancy for you, so that she will herself demand to be married to you,'—'*Mátushka*, Márfa Andréevna,' I said, 'my nourisher, how could I inspire a fancy in her? Please, *mátushka* give your hand to me, a fool, to kiss!' But she only waxed the more angry.—'The stupid!' said she, 'the stupid! He doesn't know anything, except how to kiss my hand!' And so I just held my peace altogether."

"The little man! The dear little man!" Poor fellow, he couldn't do it!" the deacon sympathizingly explained to some one near him.

The dwarf glanced at him and continued:

"Well, sir, and so it went on until spring came, and it was time for us to prepare to go home to Plodomásovo from Moscow. Márfa Andréevna ordered me to dress myself up again, and to put on an *Espanish* costume. We went to Madame Vikhióroff, and again the ladies failed to come to terms. Marfa Andréevna said to her: 'Well, at any rate, do allow your dwarf to walk up and down a little in front of the house with Nikolásha.' The Generaless agreed to this, and Metta Ivánovna and I used to stroll along the sidewalk opposite the windows. The late Márfa Andréevna was delighted, and had all sorts of costumes made for us. We would arrive, and she would give the command, 'Let us dress up Nikolásha and Metta today in peasant costumes!' So we would both make our appearance in wooden shoes, I in a blouse and hat, and Metta Ivánovna in a tall cap, and we would walk in front of the house, and the public would stand and stare at us. Another time, she would order us to be dressed as a Turkish man and a Turkish woman, and again we would walk up and down; or as a sailor and his lass, and we would walk in that array. And we also had costumes as bears, made of light brown flannel, in the nature of furniture-covers. We would be thrust into them, as you would thrust a hand into a glove, or a foot into a stocking, so that only our eyes were visible, and on our little heads, were woollen bands, which waggled like ears. But they did not send us into the street in these

costumes, but ordered us dressed thus when the two ladies were sitting at table drinking coffee, and we were made to wrestle on the rug opposite the table. Metta Ivánovna was very strong, in spite of her being a woman, yet if I gave her a good trip under the leg, she always toppled over immediately. But I almost always yielded to Metta Ivánovna, because I was sorry for her on account of her sex, and the Generaless would immediately call the lap-dog and set him on me to defend her, and it would fly at my calves, and Márfa Andréevna would get angry . . . well, I didn't mind being conquered! And the late lamented ordered us the very finest costumes—I have mine yet: they dressed me like a French grenadier, and Metta Ivánovna like a Marquise. I had a bear's-fur shako, as tall and long as that of a uniform, and a gun with a bayonet, and a short sabre, and Metta Ivánovna had a robe and a big fan. I used to stand at the door with my gun, and Metta Ivánovna would pass with her fan, and I would give her the military salute; and then Márfa Andréevna and the Generaless would set to bargaining for us again, with the object of marrying us. And I must inform you that my mistress had all these costumes and outfits for me and Metta Ivánovna made at her expense, because she already firmly hoped that we would buy Metta Ivánovna, and the more of these costumes she had made for us two, the more convinced did she become that we both belonged to her; but it turned out quite otherwise. As Madame Generaless Karolína Kárlovna Vikhióroff was a German, she made no objection to these things for her benefit, and accepted them, but would not give in. Just before spring, Márfa Andréevna suddenly said to her, with decision: "But what is this you and I are doing, *mátushka*? We are getting nowhere. We must make an end of it somehow," she said, and they did make such an end that it pretty nearly resulted in both the ladies being carried to the Vagánkovo cemetery. My late mistress began to pine away, she turned all yellow with bile, began to rage at every one, and did not

want to wait a single minute. It was:—"give her Metta Ivánovna, so that she might marry me to her!"

While other people were celebrating the Bright Resurrection of Christ, trouble reigned in our house. We were waiting for the final answer on the Tuesday of the following week, and did not know how to curb our impatience and exist until the day. And then Alexyéi Nikítitch,—may God give him health—who was already greatly vexed over this affair, suddenly had an idea, or took counsel with some of the clever officers of his regiment, and announced to his mamma that Madame Vikhióroff's dwarf had disappeared. This made Márfa Andréevna feel much better, you know, for now no one possessed that woman, and she began to talk incessantly about it. "And how did she disappear?" she would ask. Alexyéi Nikítitch replied that she had been stolen. "How? Did some Jew do it?" she kept asking. We invented the first thing that popped into our heads; we said that every one had seen a reddish-haired Jew, with a beard just seize her and carry her off.

"Well, then why did she not stop him?" she deigned to inquire. "Because," they told her, "he ran from street to street, from lane to lane, and so got off with her."—"Yes, she reasoned, "and the girl was such a fool, that she did not even cry out while she was being abducted. My Nikolái would not have surrendered on any terms."—"How could I surrender to a Jew, madame?" said I. She believed it all, as though she had been a child. But just then, Alexyéi Nikítitch suddenly made a little mistake, or, I may say, overdid his guilefulness. Of course, his object was to pack Márfa Andréevna and me off to the country as speedily as possible so that the affair might be forgotten, and he said to his mamma: "Don't worry, mamma," he said; "they will find that dwarf, because they are searching for her, and the moment they do find her, I will write to you in the country. But my late mistress caught at the word: "No indeed," said she, "if they are searching for her, I had better wait, for I chiefly want now to have a look at that Jew who carried

her off." So then, gentlemen, we arranged with a policeman to help us lie; and he used to come every day, and lie, and say: "They're hunting for her but can't find her." Every day she gave him a five-ruble note, and every day she sent me to church to have a prayer-service celebrated to Ioann the Warrior, for the recovery of a fugitive slave—"

"To Ioann the Warrior? Did you say that you went to have a service to Ioann the Warrior?" interrupted the deacon.

"Yes, sir, to Ioann the Warrior."

"Well then, I congratulate you, my friend, for you had the service celebrated to the wrong saint."

"Deacon, do me the favour to sit down," said Father Savély, with decision: "and do you, Nikolái, proceed with your story."

"But why should I proceed, Father, when almost all my tale is already told?—One day, Márfa Andréevna and I were driving from the chapel of the Iberian Mother of God, when, bang! on Petróvka Street, straight to meet us, came Generaless Vikhióroff and Metta with her, driving along. Then Márfa Andréevna understood the whole thing, and you may believe me or not gentlemen, as you like, but she fell to weeping bitterly in the carriage."

The dwarf paused.

"Well, Nikolái," prompted Archpriest Savély.

"Well, sir, and when we reached home, she said to Alexyéi Nikítitch: "You are a fool, dear son, to dare to cheat your mother, and even bring in a policeman."—and thereupon she ordered the carriages brought round, and we went away."

CHAPTER V

NIKOLÁI AFANÁSIEVITCH turned in his chair toward all his hearers, and added:—"I told you, you know, that it was a very simple story, and not in the least interesting. And after this, sister," he added, rising, "let us go!"

Márya Afanásievna began to make ready: but again the deacon began to argue that Nikolái Afanásievitch had not had his service celebrated to the right saint. "It was not my business to know, Father Deacon," Nikolái Afanásievitch justified himself, as he looked for his down-wadded cap.

"Yes, it was! It certainly was! You ought to know to whom to pray."

"Excuse me, sir, excuse me, the first time I went to the church I sent up the slip of paper, 'for a fugitive slave,'—and half a ruble, and the priest began the service to Ioann the Warrior—and so it continued afterward.

"Oï! If that is the case, the priest was a bad one. . . ."

"How? how? how? How was the priest bad?" Father Benefáktoff unexpectedly interposed with his rapid speech.

"He was bad because he didn't know his business, Father Zakháriya," Akhílla answered with egregious ease of manner. "Can it be proper to pray to Ioann the Warrior *for a fugitive slave?*"

"Yes; yes: and to whom ought one to pray, according to you? To whom? To whom?"

"To whom? Do you mean to say that you have forgotten? There used to be a list pasted up at the church-warden's place. It has been taken down now, but I still remember to what saint on what occasion it prescribed prayers."

"Yes."

"Well, then, it was Saint Feódor of Tyre, if you must know, to whom he should have prayed."

"You argue wrongly: he did quite right in celebrating the service to Ioann the Warrior."

"Don't you get mixed up, Father Zakháriya."

"I tell you he celebrated correctly."

"And I tell you, don't you get mixed up needlessly."

"Well, what are you quarrelling with me for?"

"I'm not—it's you who are quarrelling with me. I can put you to confusion this very minute, if you like."

"Well—do it then!"

"By heaven, my dear soul, I will!"

"Well do it, do it!"

"By heaven, I'll put you to confusion. I ask nothing better, because I know that table of Saints by heart."

"Well, don't chatter, but just put me to confusion, put me to confusion," said father Zakháriya Benefáktóff rapidly, smiling and exulting as he gazed now at the deacon, now at father Tuberózoff, who preserved a dignified silence.

"So you want me to put you to confusion? All right," said Akhílla with decision, and immediately, stripping the wide sleeve of his cassock far above his elbow, he bent down the thumb of his left hand with his right hand, as though he were intending to break it off, and began:—"Here's number one: For the healing of fever and chills,—pray to Saint Maro."

"To Saint Maro," father Zakháriya repeated after him, in assent.

"For rupture,—to Great Martyr Artémiy," checked off Akhílla, bending down a second finger in the same way.

"To Artémiy," repeated father Benefáktóff.

"For the removal of sterility,—to Román the Wonder-worker. If the husband hates his wife,—to the Martyrs Gúriy, Sámon, and Aviv; for exorcising demons,—to Saint Nifónt; for delivery from sensual passions,—to Saint Fomáda. . . ."

"And to Saint Moiséi of Hungary," quietly interpolated

Benefáktoff, who, up to this point, had only nodded his head in tempo.

The deacon, who had already bent down all five fingers, reflected for a second, looking Father Zakáriya in the eye the while, and then, unclosing his left hand, in order to bend it with the right, he ejaculated:

"Yes, and one may pray to Moiséi of Hungary."

"Well, now go on."

"Against drinking-spells, to Martyr Bonifátiy. . . ."

"And to Moiséi of Múrin."

"What, sir?"

"To Bonifátiy and Moiséi of Múrin," repeated father Zakháriya.

"That's correct," remarked the deacon.

"Go on."

"For preservation against malicious witchcraft,—to the holy Martyr Kiprián. . . ."

"And to Saint Ustíniy."

"Now, please stop prompting me, Father Zakháriya!"

"Why, he won't allow anything! It is plainly printed in Russian words: 'and to Saint Ustíniy.'"

"Well, all right! Well—and to Saint Ustíniy; and for the recovery of stolen articles and fugitive slaves," (from this point on, the deacon began to emphasize his words),—"to Feódor of Tyre whose memory we commemorate on the seventeenth of February."

But no sooner had Akhílla uttered his last word than Father Zakháriya, with the same gentle and dispassionate speech as before, continued the recital of the calendar with the words:

"And to Ioann the Warrior, whose memory we commemorate on the tenth of July."

Akhílla winked very hard, and remarked:

"Correct: I have remembered now that one can also pray to Ioann the Warrior."

"In that case, why have you seen fit to wrangle for a whole hour, Father Deacon?" asked Nikolái Afanásievitch, as he offered his hand to Akhílla in farewell.

"Well—oh, go along with you! I quite forgot the duplicates, and that's why I have been disputing," replied the deacon.

"That, sir, is what is called hunting for your cap when it has been on your head all the while.—My most profound respects, Father Deacon!"

"Hunting for my cap. . . . Ah, you dear little man!" ejaculated Akhílla with a grin, as he lifted Nikolái Afanásievitch from the floor, set him on the palm of his hand, and exclaimed: "He's as light as a tuft of down!"

"Stop that!" commanded father Tuberózoff.

The deacon released the dwarf, and as he set him on the ground, he jestingly remarked, that judging by the lightness of Nikolái Afanásievitch, he could not be sold by weight; but Akhílla's flightiness had somewhat vexed the archpriest, and he retorted:

"And do you know who is valued according to his weight?"

"Who, sir?"

"The feather-head."¹

"I thank you humbly, sir."

"Don't mention it."

The deacon was abashed, and as he passed his pocket-handkerchief over the nap of his hat, he said:

"But you can't get along anywhere without strategy," and thereupon, somewhat sulkily, he strode out of the door.

All the other guests soon took their leave, and dispersed in various directions.

Nikolái Afanásievitch and his sister were borne swiftly away in the *tróika-drozhky* with its bronze tires, while Tuberózoff walked quietly arm in arm with that same Daryánoff with whom we have already seen him in the tiny house of the altar-bread baker Prepótensky. As they crossed the bridge together, they halted for a moment, and the archpriest said, as though suddenly recalling something to mind:

¹ The dignified archpriest here condescends to a pun. *Po vyés* = by weight. *Povyésa* = a light-brained man, a mad-cap, a feather-head.

"Is it not remarkable that that old legend—that fairy-tale which the dwarf has just narrated to us, and which I have already heard so many times, an insignificant little tale about that old woman's knitting-needles,—has not only refreshed me, but has soothed down in me that irritation which the new affair of the other day had induced in me? Is not this a plain sign that I have grown old, and am inclined to live in the past? But no, it is not that; I have been just like this from my childhood, and this very moment, the following incident has recurred to my mind. Once, while I was a student, I arrived in the village where I had spent my childhood's years, and there I found that they were removing the little wooden church, and erecting a stately, stone temple . . . and I burst out sobbing."

"What about?"

"Just fancy: I was sorry for the poor, little, wooden church. They are erecting a wondrous and brilliant temple in Russia and it will be all bright and warm for our descendants at their devotions, but it pains me to see the old beams ruthlessly chopped up."

"But why preserve things from the days when we did nothing but play at jack-straws and marry off dwarfs for our amusement?"

"Yes, pray observe that there was much, very much of the poverty-stricken in that, but it exhaled for me the Russian spirit. I remembered that relic of ancient times, and it made me feel alert and pleasant sensations, and was my reward for having preserved my sympathies. Do you, gentlemen, the Russian people, live in harmony with your ancient tradition! Woe to him who hath it not when old age approaches! 'For these rods strike men monotonously, but for me there drops from them a source of sweet recitals.' . . . O, how I would like to die at peace with my old tradition!"

"And, of course, that is what will happen."

"Just imagine—I am afraid that it will not."

"Your fears are vain. Who can prevent you?"

"How can I tell, how can I tell who it will be?— But ex-

cuse me, what is this I see?" concluded the archpriest, glancing at a cloud of dust which had made its appearance on the hill.

This cloud accompanied a travelling-tarantas, drawn by a troika-team, and in this equipage sat two men: one tall, brawny, black-complexioned, with fiery eyes, and a disproportionately large upper lip; the other slender, clean-shaven, with a perfectly impassive face, and light, watery eyes.

The equipage with these passengers galloped swiftly upon the bridge, and after crossing the river, turned along the bank to the left.

"What unpleasant faces!" said the archpriest, turning away.

"But do you know who they are?"

"No, thank God, I do not!"

"Well, then, I am going to give you pain. That is the official we have been expecting, Prince Bornovolókoff; I recognize him, although I have not seen him for a long time. That is precisely who it is; there they are stopping at Bi-zúkhin's gate."

"Pray tell me, which of them is Bornovolókoff?"

"Bornovolókoff is the one on the left—the small man."

"And what sort of a person is the other?"

"That person must simply be his secretary. He, also, is distinguished in some ways."

"Is he a great jurist?"

"Hm! Well, I haven't heard that about him, but he has been imprisoned in the fortress, in connection with some trouble with the students."

"Good heavens! And what is the name of that man?"

"Izmáil Termoséssoff."

"Termoséssoff?"

"Yes, Termoséssoff; Izmáil Petróff Termoséssoff."¹

"Heavens! Our Tzar certainly owns a very mixed lot of people!"

¹ Bornovolókoff is compounded of words signifying, harrow-dragger. *Termoséssoff*, is a little more remotely compounded of words meaning prison-sitter. TRANSLATOR.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, dear me, that man is thick-lipped and horrible, and has been imprisoned in the fortress, and has been set at liberty, and his name is Termosésóff."

"It really is dreadful, isn't it?" exclaimed Daryánoff, bursting into a laugh.

"You may say what you like, but it really is dreadful," repeated Tuberózoff.— "A man's name is not merely an empty sound: not without cause did the singer of the Odyssey say that 'at that moment of birth each man receives his name as a sweet gift.'—But farewell for the present. Shall we meet this evening?"

"Without fail."

"That's capital: we shall have time there to finish our discussion of names and those who bear them."

Thereupon, the archpriest shook hands with his companion, and they parted.

In the evening, Tuberózoff was the first to arrive at the house of the Commissioner of Police, and was so very early that the host was still enjoying his after-dinner nap, and the hostess was wiping off with a sponge the camellias and oleanders which surrounded the corner divan in the little drawing-room.

The hostess and the archpriest greeted each other with much delight, and with a simplicity which bore witness to their friendship.

"Am I intruding too early?" asked the archpriest.

"It is very early indeed," replied the hostess laughing.

"O nonsense! My wife was right when she tried to detain me, and said, 'why don't you sit quietly at home? You have been seized with a perfect mania for gadding about.' Here, let me help you wash the flowers."

And the old man, following up his words with action, took off his cassock, rolled up the sleeves of his under-cassock, and arming himself with a damp rag, set to work.

He had not spent more than half an hour in this occupation, intermingled with insignificant fragments of conversation with

the hostess as to the condition of her plants, when under the windows of the house the trampling of a six-horse team became audible. Tuberózoff started and glanced out of the window, said to himself: "Aha! Yes, it is well that I made haste." Then he exclaimed aloud: "Pármén Semyónitch! Is it you, my friend?" and hastened to meet Marshal of Nobility Tugánoff, who was alighting from the equipage.

CHAPTER VI

NOW, willy-nilly, submitting ourselves to insurmountable circumstances which we have encountered in the path of our chronicle, we must abandon for a time both the Stáry Górod archpriest, and the Marshal of Nobility, and make acquaintance with an entirely different social circle of that town. We must enter the house of excise officer Biziúkhin, where today have arrived the guests from Petersburg long, long expected in the town: the excise-official's old comrade in the University, Prince Bornovolókoff, now a fairly prominent Petersburg official, travelling about to inspect something or other, and establish something or other, and his secretary, Termosésoff, also a former acquaintance of Biziúkhin, and a sympathizer with his views. We will enter precisely at that hour, preceding dinner, when the posting-tróika which had transported the visitors to Stáry Górod halted at the door.

The excise official himself was not at home, and the domestic element was represented by his wife, the youthful lady concerning whom we know something from the words of Deacon Akhílla, the old altar-bread baker, and schoolmaster Prepótsky. This interesting lady sat alone, awaiting her valued guests, of whom Termosésoff interested her to a remarkable degree, since he was known to her as a very influential political agent. She had heard a great deal from her husband about the grand character and the great significance of this person, and therefore, being herself a woman politician, she was anticipating the arrival of this guest not without trepidation. As she was desirous of presenting herself to him in the best and most advantageous light possible for her reputation. Madame Biziúkhin had been worrying ever since the early

morning over the question how she might put the house in such a condition that even the outward aspect of her dwelling might produce the correct impression upon the strangers, at the very first glance. The excise-man's wife had already, at a very early hour, several times made the round of all her rooms, and had found that nothing was as it should be anywhere.

As she came to a halt in the centre of the neat and well-furnished drawing-room, she exclaimed in despair: "Yes; the devil only knows what is wrong! Everything is exactly the same as it is at the Porókhontzeffs', and at the Daryánoffs', and at the postmaster's—in short, as it is at everybody else's house, and even much better! For example, there is no clock on the Porókhontzeffs' chimney-piece—and there is no chimney-piece; but let us assume that the fireplace does not matter—hygiene demands it: but why have we these wall-bracket-lights, these statuettes—and, in conclusion, why have we this clock when we have a clock in the sitting-room? . . . And the sitting-room? Heavens! There's a piano there—and music. . . . No, it won't do at all, and I don't want these newcomers to treat me slightly because of these trifles. I don't want Termosésóff to be able to write to me anything resembling what that clever Masha, in that gifted romance, 'The Living Soul,' wrote to her betrothed who lived in a nice house, and drank tea made with a silver samovár. That clever girl wrote to him plainly, 'after what I have seen at our house, all is over between us.' No, I will not have that. I know how active workers should be received! One thing is vexatious: I don't know they have everything in Petersburg. . . . Surely, all their things must be very nasty—I mean, very fine—whew! I mean nasty. . . . 'The devil knows what ails me. Yes; but where am I to put all these things? can I possibly fling them all out of doors? But that would be a pity—they would get spoiled; and they all cost a lot of money, and what's the use of throwing away things, when all around you, wherever you cast your eyes,—yonder, in the bedroom there are lace curtains—let us assume that they are in

the bedroom, where the guests will not see them . . . well, and if they should! It's a frightful mess! And then, the children are so well dressed!— Well, I need not exhibit them . . . let them sit quiet: but, nevertheless . . . 'tis a pity to throw all the things away! No, it will be best to arrange only my husband's room."

Thereupon, the young official summoned her people, and ordered them to carry off immediately to the store-room everything which seemed to her superfluous in the furnishings of her husband's study.

The excise man's study, whose furniture had already suffered for the benefit of the rooms belonging to the mistress and ruler of the house, was now stripped bare, and presented a very sorry spectacle. Nothing was left in it but a table, a chair and two couches.

"That's capital!" said Madame Biziúkhin to herself. "At any rate, there is one chamber where everything is exactly as it should be." Then she made two ink-blots on the writing-table, kicked the spittoon into a corner, and sprinkled sand on the floor. But, O heavens! On returning to the room the lady perceived that she had come very near overlooking the most horrible thing: on the wall hung a holy picture!

"Yermóshka! Yermóshka! Take down that *ikóna* as quickly as you can, and carry it . . . well, I'll hide it in the chest of drawers."

The holy picture was concealed.

"How stupid it was," she reflected, "of the bridegroom while awaiting the *living soul* to smash all his statues and tear all his curtains! Hey, there, Yermóshka, give me here these curtains! Be quick, fold them up. That's it! Now, see here, you imp, go dress yourself as well as possible."

"As well as possible, ma'am?"

"Well, yes, of course. What clothes have you?"

"An under-tunic, ma'am."

"An under-tunic, you fool! Put on your waistcoat, a shirt-front, and a new caftan,—all of them, and see that every-

thing is as it should be,—and be so good as not to answer me in lackey-fashion. ‘What, ma’am do you wish, ma’am?’ and, ‘I announce to you, ma’am’; but say simply, ‘what do you want?’ or ‘I told you,’ do you understand?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Not ‘yes, ma’am you stupid boy, but simply, ‘yes.’”

“Yes.”

“That’s very good. Now go and dress yourself. We are to have guests. Do you understand?”

“Yes, I understand, ma’am.”

“‘Yes,’ you fool, ‘yes, I understand,’ and not ‘ma’am.’”

“Yes, I understand.”

“Well, begone, if you do understand.”

The anxious hostess went to her boudoir, opened a large walnut-wood clothes-press containing gowns, and having passed her entire wardrobe in review, selected the very worst things she could find, and ordered her maid to dress her in them.

“Márfa! You don’t like the upper classes very much?”

“Why not, ma’am?”

“‘Why ma’am’ forsooth! There simply isn’t any ‘why’. Why don’t you like them?”

The girl was perplexed.

“What good things have they done to you?”

“Nothing good, ma’am.”

“Nothing, and you’re a dunce, and it means that you don’t like them, and henceforth I beg that you will not speak to me in that way: ‘why, ma’am,’ and ‘nothing, ma’am,’ but say simply, ‘why,’ ‘nothing.’ Do you understand?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“There’s that ‘yes, ma’am’. Say simply ‘yes.’

“But why must I do that, madam?”

“Because I wish it.”

“I obey, ma’am.”

“‘I obey, ma’am’— Didn’t I just tell you to say simply ‘I obey,’ and ‘yes’?”

“I obey, and yes! But it is difficult for me, madam.”

"Difficult? It will be easy enough after a while. Every one will speak that way. Do you hear?"

"I hear, ma'am."

"'I hear, ma'am.'— You fool, leave the room, I will discharge you if you answer me again in that fashion. There will soon be no more masters at all! . . . They will all soon . . . have their heads chopped off. Do you understand?"

"I understand," replied the girl, not knowing how to free herself.

"Go away, and send me Yermóshka."

"Now, one more thing is indispensable,—I must have a school."

And Madame Biziúkhin, handing Yermóshka ten copper five-kopék pieces, ordered him to lure into the house from the street as many small brats as he could, telling each one of them that he would receive from her another five-kopék piece.

Yermóshka returned ten minutes later accompanied by a perfect mob of tattered street urchins. Madame Biziúkhin presented them with five-kopék coins, and seating them in her husband's study, she said:

"I am going to teach you, and I'll give you each a five-kopék piece for it. Is that all right?"

The brats tugged at their noses, and hissed out:

"Well, we don't mind. . . ."

"But we don't know how to read books," said one small urchin, more intelligent than the rest.

"You will learn a song, and not from a book."

"Well, a song will be all right."

"Go and sit down with them, Yermóshka."

Yermóshka sat down, and bashfully covered his mouth with his hand.

"Now sing after me."

"As the young blacksmith comes forth from the forge"

The children repeated it haltingly, after a fashion.

"Glory!"¹ cried Madame Biziúkhin.

"Glory!" repeated the children.

"Under his coat-skirt three knives, three sharp knives he bears. Glory!"

At this point, Yermóshka raised his head a little, and gazing out of the window, exclaimed:

"Madame—visitors!"

Madame Biziúkhin threw away her ruler, which she had been flourishing as she taught the children the song, and dashed swiftly into the hall.

Yermóshka had got the start of her, and bounded out first into the vestibule, and then out upon the porch, and flew to help Bornovolókoff and Termosésoff out of their carriage. The young political lady was extremely pleased with herself,—the visitors had found her, so to speak,—*in full toilet.*"

¹ There is often a refrain of "Glory" to each line of the ancient ballads. TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER VII

PRINCE BORNOVOLÓKOFF and Termosésóff, when attentively inspected, were much more striking than they had appeared at a cursory glance to Tuberózoff.

The Inspector himself was the living image of a dead perch: small bony, wide in the gills, with eyes entirely veiled in a sort of sleepy moisture. He seemed good for nothing whatsoever, and incapable of anything; he was not a man, but just a dead perch, who had traversed all seas and lakes, and having now died, had grown so slimy that nothing any longer burned or shone in him.

Termosésóff somewhat resembled a centaur. His huge masculine height was associated with a healthy but thoroughly feminine build; he was narrow in the shoulders, and disproportionately broad in the hips; his thighs were regular horse-hams; his knees were fleshy and round; his arms were thin and sinewy; his neck was long, but had no Adam's apple as is the case with most adult men, but a hollow like a horse's; his head had a mane which stood out in all directions, his face was swarthy, with a long, apparently Armenian nose, and with an enormous upper lip, which rested ponderously on the lower one; Termosésóff's eyes were light-brown in hue with sharp, black spots in the pupils; his gaze was steadfast and intelligent.

The costumes of the newly-arrived visitors were rather noteworthy: Bornovolóköff wore a short, grey overcoat, in the fashion of a riding-coat, and a Scotch cap with a fancy-plaid border, and Termosésóff had on a capacious, dark-brown sack-coat, girt with a broad strap, and a uniform cap, with a green band, and a cockade. Bornovolóköff wore fine leather half-boots, while Termosésóff had on what are called Suvároff boots.

In general, Termosésóff was the more broadly cut and more stoutly sewed, and built, altogether, on a much broader foundation than his superior official. This fundamental strength was still further reinforced by his superior manner of carrying himself.

Inspector Bornovolókoff, as he landed on his feet from the carriage, before he walked to the porch, took several brisk but uneven steps, looking about him the while on all sides, and casting a glance behind him, as though he were contemplating the town, and admiring it; but Termosésóff did not gaze or look about him, or give himself any airs of being the chief personage, but walked quietly and calmly at Bornovolókoff's left shoulder. Termosésóff's horse-head hung a little on his breast, and he seemed to be listening respectfully to what his superior was thinking about inside his head at the moment. Madame Biziúkhin saw all this. She was scanning the new arrivals from behind the window-lintels, and was stupefied with perplexity: which of these two was the Inspector, and which was Termosésóff? According to her calculations Prince Bornovolókoff certainly must be the big man, for he wore a uniform cap, and a cockade, but the other, with no uniform, but a riding-coat and a motley cap, —was certainly Termosésóff, the free man who served for hire. Moreover, the hostess was perplexed by another question: how ought she to receive them?—Go out to meet them?—that was too ceremonious. Do nothing, sit until they entered?—that would seem affected. Read a book?—Yes, that was quite the most natural thing—to be found reading a book.

And she caught up the first book that came to hand, and glancing over the top of it, through the window, she noticed that Bornovolókoff, whom she took for Termosésóff, had decidedly dirty hands, while her idle hands were as white as foam. Madame Biziúkhin instantly seized a handful of earth from a flower-pot which stood on the window-sill, rubbed it in her palms, and throwing one leg over the other knee, sat there with her book, her back half-turned to the window.

At that moment, a cheerful and rather gracious bass voice became audible in the ante-room, and immediately thereafter, the door opened noisily, and the two guests entered the vestibule, Termosésóff in advance, followed by Bornovolókoff.

CHAPTER VIII

THE hostess sat still, and did not rise. Only at that moment did she remember how unsuitable the pot of flowers on the window-sill must seem to her guests, and despite all her perplexity she began to reflect what would be the most adroit method of flinging it out of the window. This thought so engrossed her, that she did not even hear the first question addressed to her by one of her newly-arrived guests, which fact imparted to her the aspect of a person unfeignedly immersed in reading, to the point of self-forgetfulness.

Termoséssoff gazed at her from across the threshold, and was obliged to repeat his question.

“Do you happen to be Madame Biziúkhin?” he inquired, quietly thrusting his neck and shoulders into the room.

“Yes, I am she,” replied the hostess, without rising from her chair.

Termoséssoff entered the room, and began:

“My name is Termoséssoff,—Izmáil, son of Petróff Termoséssoff, a former comrade of your husband in education, but later on we had a falling-out, through stupidity; and this is Prince Afanásy Feodósyeitch Bornovolókoﬀ, an official from Petersburg, an Inspector, and we are going to investigate everybody here. How do you do!”

Termoséssoff put out his hand.

Madame Biziúkhin gave her hand to Termoséssoff, and with the other hand, as she laid her book on the window-sill, she knocked the big flower-pot into the street.

“What was that? I think you have dropped some flowers out of the window?”

“No, no, it is of no importance.— It was not flowers at all, but grass from a cut; but it is no longer fit to use.”

"Of course it isn't: What jester heals a cut with grass now-a-days? However, perhaps there still are some asses of that sort.— But where is your husband?"

Madame Biziúkhin looked at the inspector, who, without uttering a word, had quietly seated himself on a small divan, and answered Termosésoff, that her husband was not at home.

"No! Well, that doesn't matter; it's a family affair, we'll settle it among ourselves. He and I used to be great friends, you see, but afterwards we quarrelled through foolishness: nevertheless, I'll tell you frankly, that your husband is not a fit mate for you. No, he's not your equal—there's no use talking about it, he's no mate for you. He's a fool, and nothing else. It is just his luck that you could get him such a place in the excise department; but you are a brave lady, and have managed it all; you have obtained a position for your husband, and your surroundings here are splendid!" he added, having, so far as he was able, peered into all the rooms visible from the drawing-room. And espying in the study stripped of all decorations, a throng of children who were crowded together on the threshold, he added:

"A-a! So you have a little school here! Well! that little room is a pretty poor place; but it doesn't matter for a school. What are you teaching that scabby gang?" he wound up abruptly.

Madame Biziúkhin, who was not quick-witted, did not know in the least what answer she ought to make. But Termosésoff himself rescued her from the difficulty. Without waiting for her reply, he stepped up to the little lads, and having grasped the chin of one, and turned his head upward, he said:

"Well, do you know how to steal peas? Steal away, my boy, and when they exile you to Siberia, my blessing upon you. Dismiss them, Biziúkhina! Go into the yards, children! March off, and thrash the peas!"

The small boys went out quietly, one by one, and strung along in goose-file across the drawing-room, ran swiftly through the anteroom, and then out of doors.

"What are all these schools? Fudge and nonsense!"

"I think so too," the hostess ventured to interpose.

"Yes, of course; you don't receive a subsidy, I suppose?"

"No; a subsidy, indeed!"

"Why not? Others of our party take it.— And, probably, this is your offspring?" he inquired, indicating the sprucely-dressed Yermóshka, who had just entered; and without waiting for an answer, he said to him:

"Hearken to me, my dear chip of the old block; order the servants to give us a chance to wash up, my young friend."

"This is not my son at all," remarked the dumfounded hostess.

But Termosésoff did not hear her. Having hit upon the idea that he beheld before him the hostess's son, he proceeded to expound to her for what she should prepare the lad, and how she ought to guide him.

"Adapt him to the Government service. Don't let him get a fancy for literature. Take my own case. I haven't any right to enter the service, but, nevertheless, somehow or other, and by hook or crook, sideways and by crawling from below, I have caught on. Yes, ma'am: for, you see, I used formerly to be a nihilist, and was even angry with your husband for getting himself a post in the service. Stupid! Why shouldn't we serve? They like our sort in the service, and in the service one has money; in the service one has influence,—quite the other way about from what it is in literature. And there, moreover, talent is required, but in the service ability is even detrimental, and people of ability are not liked. Eh! Yes, ma'am, máushka, yes, ma'am! Train your son for the service, for the Government service."

"Yes, but workshops are coming into vogue," remarked Dánka.

"Are they? Yes—they are," replied Termosésoff ironically.— "They'd much better stand firm, than to keep 'coming in' all the time. Yes, I see that you are a routinist. In Russia, the strength is in the *service* not in the workshops with Vera Pávlovna.

"That is overindulgence, but in the Government employ I am serving a real end; and I'm sorting out people: 'you are thus and so,—so you'll get treated this way, and you are that way and 'tother,—so will get treated this other way. Aren't you one of our people? I'll force you, I'll stifle, I'll crush you, and the Treasury will pay me for doing it.' It may not give much—three or four thousand rubles in salary. That's the set price at present. Why are you staring at me like that with your pretty little eyes? Does it seem strange to hear of this practice, because you're not accustomed to it?"

The astounded hostess held her peace, and her guest went on:

"Here you are, setting up schools, aren't you? As a matter of fact, it is the accepted idea with the stupid red cocks of the nihilists, that you should be praised for that, but, as Termosésoff is a practical man, he wouldn't do that. Termosésoff says: Drop your schools, they are pernicious. If the populace learns to read, they will read religious books. Do you think the power to read and write should be classed among the destructive agents? No, ma'am, it belongs among the constructive elements, and we must, first of all, destroy."

"But they say that the revolution is impossible at present, with our populace," the hostess ventured to reply.

"Yes,—and what the devil do we want now with a revolution, when without any revolution matters are coming our way in the best possible manner?— And there's that small son of yours standing and listening. Why do you permit him to listen to what the grown-ups say?"

"He is not my son at all," replied the wife of the excise official.

"How isn't he your son? Then who is he?"

"Our page-boy, my servant."

"A page-boy, a servant! Well, he's dressed up to kill. Go and prepare materials for us to wash with, you young devil!"

"They're ready," replied the well-trained Yermóshka curtly.

"Then why didn't you say so long ago? Get out!"

Termosésoff turned to Bornovolókoﬀ, who had sat motion-

less during the whole duration of this conversation, and assuming a very gracious tone, he said:

"Permit me to have the key, and I will get you your towel from the bag."

But the taciturn prince curled up, and did not give the key.

"But a towel is certainly provided for you," remarked the hostess.

"It is!" shouted Yermóshka from the study.

"It is"— How that villain yells." Termosésoff mimicked Yermóshka in very comical fashion, and added: "There's the purest-blooded sort of a nihilist for you." Then he followed Bornovolókoﬀ into the study, where washing facilities had been provided.

The first act was over, and the hostess was left alone,—alone, but with an immense mass of new sensations, and very profound thoughts.

Madame Biziúkhin had not, in the least, expected this from Termosésoﬀ, and she had been much impressed by him. She felt that it was both sweet and terrible to listen to his unexpected remarks, which were a complete novelty to her. She could not, as yet, make up her mind whether it was better or worse than what she had looked for; but, in any case, it was agreeable to her, that in everything she had heard there was a very great deal that was convenient and easy of appropriation. This pleased her.

"So that is what it seems to be really clever!" she meditated, as she kept her astonished gaze rivetted on the door through which Termosésoﬀ had disappeared. "Every one else is severe, and gives orders—but there is nothing of that sort about him: everything is permitted, everything is possible, and yet this man is not afraid of any one. It would be easy to live with such a man; it would even be sweet to submit to him."

The wily stranger had fatally conquered the heart of Dánka. All the audacity, by which she had distinguished herself from others before her father, her husband, Varnávka, and all

human society, had suddenly abandoned her in the most treacherous manner.

After her conversation with Termosésoff Madame Biziúkhin felt an insuperable longing for slavery. She already loved him—loved rationally, of course—for his indubitable superiority. Everything about her guest began to please Madame Biziúkhin: What a voice he had! What strength! And, altogether, what a man he was! . . . How charming he was! Not a gay Lothario, like her husband, not a wet rag of a man like Prepótensky; no, he was stubborn, a genuine man. . . . He would not yield in anything. . . . He . . . comes . . . like a regular hurricane . . . scorches, burns. . . .

Yes; poor Dárya Nikoláevna Biziúkhin not only had fallen in love, but she was incurably wounded with the most violent passion. She even lost consciousness for a moment, and closing her eyes, felt an invigorating chill hitherto unknown to her, disseminate itself all over her body; there was a queer taste in her mouth, at the root of her tongue, her mouth grew cold, the pulse beat rapidly in her ears, and the jugular vein in her neck could be heard throbbing swiftly.

Yes! The deed was accomplished! Where are you, where are you now, poor excise official, and does not your brow itch like that of a young goat whose horns are sprouting?

CHAPTER IX

THE love-lorn Madame Biziúkhin had long since heard through the closed door of the study, now a duck-like splashing, again a furious splashing and florid exercises of the throat; but all this had come to an end, and still Termosésoff did not make his appearance. Could it be that he had not yet got through talking to that dumb, broad-faced prince of his, or was he asleep? . . . That last would be nothing remarkable; he must be tired from the journey. Or, perhaps, he was reading? . . . what was he reading? And why should he read, when he himself was wiser than all those who write? . . . But while she was busy with these impressions, the door opened, and the urchin Yermóshka, appeared on the threshold with a basinful of soapy water, and did not close the door behind him, and so everything was visible to Dárya Nikoláevna. Yonder, far in the depths of the room, was the figure of the broadfaced little prince, who was gazing out of the window and yonder, not by his side, but a little nearer, was the brawny torso of Termosésoff. The inspector and his secretary were both in disarray. Bornovolókoff was in his trousers, and a snow-white shirt of fine linen, upon which, over the shoulders, lay crossed the bright-scarlet ribbons of his suspenders; his small, blond head was brushed smooth, and he was still assiduously working away at it with a metal comb. But Termosésoff was standing, all puffed out, presenting himself to the full extent of face and figure: the collar of his shirt was unbuttoned, and the sleeves, rolled far above his elbows, revealed muscular arms overgrown with hair.

In his hands Termosésoff held a long, Russian towel, with red cocks embroidered on the ends, and was vigorously wiping and mopping his damp, dishevelled hair.

Judging by the energy wherewith the very agreeable Izmáil performed this operation, one might conclude, without danger of making a mistake, that the cheerful, mighty, vocal flourishes, which, a moment previously, had been wafted from the room through the closed door, had certainly emanated from Termosésóff, while Bornovolókoff had merely hissed and splashed like a duck. But now Yermóshka returned, the door banged shut, and the sweet vision vanished.

Nevertheless, Termosésóff, in that brief space of time, had succeeded in surveying the field with his eagle eye, and did not omit to comfort Madame Biziúkhin by his appearance unaccompanied by the high-cheek-boned prince. He presented himself with his sack-coat slung across his shoulders and the sleeves dangling, and holding by the ear Yermóshka, whom he shoved into the anteroom, shouting after him:

"Don't you dare to show a hair of you till I call you!"

Then he securely fastened the door into the study where the prince remained, and in the costume described, seated himself very close by the side of the excise-man's wife.

"Listen, Biziúkhina, this won't do at all, my dear woman!" he began, seizing her hand without the slightest ceremony. "Judge for yourself how you have spoiled that scoundrelly boy of yours: I called him a little pig, because he spilled water all over the prince's sleeves, and he replied: 'My mother isn't a sow, but Aksínya.'¹ Of course, you are to blame for all this, you have emancipated him so."

Then, all of a sudden, Termosésóff remarked, in an entirely different voice, with the softest possible intonation: "Well, it is yes, isn't it? Yes?" This 'yes' was uttered in such a tone, that something gave a thump in Madame Biziúkhina's heart. She comprehended that an answer was required not, in the least, to the question which had been asked, but to one of which the tacitly understood sense even frightened her by its realism, and therefore, she remained silent. But Termosésóff continued his attack.

¹ *Svínya* = sow; *Aksínya* is the same as Xenia. TRANSLATOR.

"Yes? or no? Yes, or no?" he insisted, with a shade of sharp impatience.

There was no opportunity for long reflection, and Madame Biziúkhin, raising her eyes in agitation to Termoséssoff, began timidly:

"But I don't know. . . ."

"Yes!" he exclaimed, "and that's enough! And I need no further words from you. Give me your pretty little hands. I knew from my first look at you that we belonged to each other, and I expected no other answer from you. Now, don't waste any time, but show your love by a kiss."

"Would you not like some tea?" the excise-man's wife stammered, as though she had not heard him.

"No, you can't amuse me with that. I'm not a tea-head but a desperate head."

"Perhaps you would prefer wine?" whispered Dárya Niko-láevna, wrenching herself free.

"Wine?" repeated Termoséssoff: "'thou art sweeter than myrrh and wine,'" and thereupon he drew Madame Biziúkhin to him, and whispering: "let us melt together in a kiss," he covered her little red mouth with his sole-leather lips. "And now tell me, why you are such a bold monarchist?" he began, immediately after the kiss, holding the lady's hand directly before his eyes.

"I'm not a monarchist at all," hastily protested Madame Biziúkhin.

"Then for whom are you wearing this mourning: for Maximilian of Mexico?" and Termoséssoff smilingly pointed to the black streaks under her nails, and pushing her from him, he said: "Run and wash your hands!"

The excise-official's wife blushed up to her very ears, and was ready to weep. She always had immaculately clean nails, but had deliberately dirtied them, in order to earn his praise; but what excuse could she allege? She flew to her chamber, washed her hands, and returning, with a smile she announced:

"Here I am, a republican again. I have white hands."

But her guest shook his finger at her, and replied that republicanism was a very stupid matter.

"Why advocate a republic?" he said: "You'll only catch it hot for that. But I have photographic portraits of all the Government officials with me. I'll give them to you, if you like, and we will hang them on the walls."

"Why, I have some of my own."

"But where are they? Hey? I swear by Satan himself, that I've guessed it: thou wert expecting guests from Petersburg, and, in order to show off, thou didst take and hide them! That's stupid, my daughter, stupid! Go and fetch them here, as quickly as possible, and I'll hang them up again for thee."

Madame Biziúkhin caught and convicted, again grew fiery-red to her very ears, but took the framed pictures from the table-drawer, and, at the demand of Termosésoff, brought a hammer and nails, with which he set to work.

"I think the best place of all to hang them would be on this wall?" he remarked, pointing with his finger.

"As you like."

"But why do you persist in addressing me as *you*, when I am saying *thou*? Call me *thou*. And now, hand me here the pictures."

"My husband bought them all."

"And a very good thing it is, too, that he respects the authorities, a very good thing indeed! Well, we'll put all the Ministers in a row, at the bottom. Shall I? Who's this? Gortchakóff, the Chancellor—splendid! He defended Russia for us. Well, he's a fine fellow for doing that. Come, let's hang him first of all.— And who is this? Bah! ba! bah!"

Termosésoff raised a portrait of the late Count Muravióff to the level of his face and drawled:

"Mikhaílo Nikoláevitch, how do you do, how do you do, how do you do!"

"Did you happen to be acquainted with him?"

"I? . . . Do you mean to inquire whether I was personally acquainted with him? No, God has been merciful to me,—but our party enjoyed his chats here and there. He's all

right: they praise and exalt him. He even brought one of our young ladies into the Christian faith, and inspired the muse of Nekrásóff. Hand him here, and I'll hang him mighty quick!"

"Now, there you have everything in its proper place!"

Termosésóff leaped down to the floor, seized the hostess by her elbows, and said:

"Well: And now, what reward are you going to give me?"

This struck Madame Biziúkhin as so absurd that she broke into a laugh, and inquired:

"Reward for what?"

"For everything, for my labours and my cares, and for my good will. Surely, you must be ungrateful?" and Termosésóff, taking Madame Biziúkhin's right hand, laid it on his breast.

"I have a burning heart, haven't I?" he asked, taking advantage of her embarrassment. But Dárya Nikoláevna was offended, and angrily pulling away her hand, she remarked:

"You really are altogether too audacious!"

"Te-te-te-te! 'You-ah altogeever too audasus'—but I'm not 'too audacious' but just audacious enough," Termosésóff mimicked her, as he wound his left arm around her waist.

"You are an insolent fellow. You forget that we are hardly acquainted," said the enraged Dárya Nikoláevna, tearing herself free from him.

"I'm not an atom of an insolent man, and I forget nothing, but Termosésóff is clever, simple, natural, practical in character, that is all. Termosésóff simply argues thus: If you are a clever woman, you will understand to what end you talk with a man on such intimate terms as you have been using with me, and if you yourself don't know why you bear yourself in that manner, it proves that you are stupid and not worth prizing."

Madame Biziúkhin, of course, wished, by all means, to be considered clever.

"You are very artful," she said, slightly turning away her face from Termosésóff's face.

"Artful! What need have I for artfulness here? Of course, if you love me, or if I please you, . . ."

"Who told you that I love you?"

"Come, stop lying!"

"No, I am telling you the truth. I do not love you at all, and you do not please me in the least."

"Come, stop talking nonsense! You don't love me, indeed? No—now see here: I have a feeling for you, and I understand you, and I will reveal to you what sort of a man I am, only we must be alone."

Madame Biziúkhin made no reply.

"Do you understand what I am saying? In order to know each other fully,—a rendezvous is necessary . . . with a political object, of course."

Again Madame Biziúkhin made no reply.

Termosésoff sighed, and gently releasing his lady's hand, remarked:

"Ekh, you women, you women of Great Russia! you aren't to be compared with the Polish women! No, my dear little friends, you're a long way behind the Polish women. Give Izmaïl Termosésoff to a Pole, and she would not part with him, and there'd be great goings-on with him."

"Polish women are quite another matter," said the excise-official's wife.

"Why so?"

"They love their fatherland, but we hate ours."

"Well, and what of that? Consequently, all the enemies of the Polish women are enemies of the independence of Poland, but our enemies are all Russian patriots."

"That is true."

"Well, then, who's your worst enemy here? Speak, and you shall see how he will feel the whole weight of Termosésoff's hand."

"I have many enemies."

"Mention the worst! Mention the very worst!"

"There are two who are worst."

"The names of those unfortunates, give me their names!"

"One . . . is the local Deacon, Akhílla."

"Death to Deacon Akhílla!"

"And another is Archpriest Tuberózoff."

"Perdition to Archpriest Tuberózoff!"

"Our whole town and all the people follow their lead."

"Well, and what matters the whole town and all the people? Termosésoff knows the authorities, and moreover, he fears no towns and no peoples."

"Well, and the authorities are not quite favourable to him."

"Well, if they are not very favourable, then ruin is all the more certain; now, all you have to do is to confirm all this in the proper manner, 'love me, be mine, Herodias!'"

Madame Biziúkhin kissed him without a pang.

"Now, that's honourable," exclaimed Termosésoff and having questioned his lady as to how and why her enemies Tuberózoff and Akhílla annoyed her, he pressed her hand with a smile, and withdrew to the room where his companion had remained all this time.

CHAPTER X

THE inspector was not yet asleep when his happy secretary returned to him. Clad in a white cotton jacket, Termosésoff's princely travelling-companion was lying on the couch prepared for him, and having thrown a light plaid over his feet, he was dozing or meditating, with downcast eyelids.

Termosésoff wanted to make sure whether his superior was asleep or merely feigning slumber, and with that object, he softly approached the bed, bent down his face, and called him by name.

"Are you asleep?" Termosésoff asked.

"Yes," replied Bornovolókoﬀ.

"What do you mean by 'yes'? If you answer, that indicates that you are not asleep."

"Yes."

"Well, and that makes nonsense!"

Termosésoff went away to the other divan, flung off his sack-coat, and began to prepare for slumber also.

"During the time that you've been dozing here, I have accomplished a lot," he began as he lay down.

In reply to this, Bornovolókoﬀ again merely let fall the single word *yes*, but that "yes" was a thoroughly peculiar, a curious "yes," so to speak, which continued the shadow of a question.

"Well, sir, it really is *yes*, and I may say that I have made some discoveries, of the greatest value to us."

"From that lady?"

"From the lady?— The lady—that's a matter apart—that's merely an interlude! No, sir, but do you remember what I

said to you when I caught you on Sadóvaya Street in Moscow?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I said to you: 'Your Transparency, my most-gracious Prince! Old comrades cannot be treated in this manner; they can't be cast aside; only rascals behave like that.' Did I say that to you, or did I not?"

"Yes, you said that."

"Aha! You remember! Well then, you must also remember how I afterwards unfolded to you my idea, and proved to you that you, our Prince Égalité who are now talking advantage of your birth and property in the service, must not turn up your nose at us old montagnards, and your former friends. I have expounded all this to you on the road."

"Yes, yes."

"Capital! You comprehended that it was a bad business to trifle with me, and for that I laud you. You understood that you couldn't throw me over, because hunger makes a man desperate, and when a man is hungry, he can remember a good deal can't he? And Termosésóff has a first-class memory, and plenty of shrewdness, also; when you were the very reddest sort of a revolutionist, he knew that you would, infallibly, change."

"Yes."

"You decided to take me with you, in the capacity of a secretary . . . that is to say, if the truth be told, and not to offend you with flattery, you did not decide to do that, but I forced you to take me. I scared you by the prospect that I might make public your correspondence with some of our brethren in the Vistula Provinces."

"Okh!"

"Never mind, Prince, don't sigh. I told you at that time, in Moscow, on the Sadóvaya, when I held you fast by the button, and when you were trying to get away from me, and I'll tell you again now:—Don't you grieve, and don't you groan because Termosésóff attacked you. Izmáil Termosésóff is do-

ing you a great service. There are you and your present party, where there are no such rascals as Termosésóff—though there are bigger ones, setting up newspapers and trying by one means or another, to get inspectors' posts over the dear populace."

"Yes, sir."

"Well then, you'll never accomplish it."

"Why not?"

"Because you are very unskilful: they'll recognize you patriots at once by your paws, grab you by your forelocks, and hurl you into the street."

"Hm!"

"Yes, sir; but do you drop those newspapers, and take up Termosésóff, and he'll do your business for you. Do you play Iván Tzarévitch, and I'll be your Grey Wolf."¹

"Yes, you are the Grey Wolf."

"That's just right! I am the Grey Wolf, and if I like, I can help you to catch the Horse with the Golden Mane, and the Fire-Bird, and the Tzar-Maiden, and I will establish you again in your kingdom."

And thereupon, the Grey Wolf swiftly tearing himself from his lair, bounded across to the bed of his Iván Tzarévitch, and said softly:

"Move over a little toward the wall, and I'll whisper something to you."

Bornovolókoff moved over, and Termosésóff sat down on the edge of the bed, and encircling him with his arm, began to talk very quietly.

"Lay the lash heavily on the Church—that's where the tender spot is! Frighten the big-wigs well with that!"

"I do not understand at all."

"Why, does Christianity make all men equal, or does it not? You know that the famous statesmen, so to speak, discerned mischief in the translation of the Bible into the vernac-

¹ A reference to a Russian fairy-tale, where the grateful animal helps the Tzar's son through all his troubles—the usual type of the Fairy Prince legend. TRANSLATOR.

ular tongue. Yes, sir,—Christianity—may easily be interpreted, you know, in a dangerous sense. And every priest may be such an interpreter.”

“Our priests are bad, they are not feared.”

“Yes, that’s right so long as they are bad, but you forget that some busybodies take an interest in them; that perhaps if they are set free, the priests also will become different. What is needed, is not to ease their condition, but to draw the lines closer.”

“Yes, you may be right!”

“That’s so, sir. Insist that everything must be sorted over and braced up, and you will bless Fate for having sent you Termosésoff, and do you cling fast to him, as Iván Tzarévitch did to the Grey Wolf. I’ll fish up for you such an account; I’ll concoct for you such a report, that even your enemies will be forced to render you honour, and recognize in you an administrative genius.”

Termosésoff lowered his voice still more, and went on:

“You remember how, the last time you were talking with the manager of the Governor’s Chancellery, as you emerged from the Club in the government capital, he said that His Excellency regretted his former lack of tact, and, especially, that he had permitted himself to be familiar with divers patriots.”

“Yes.”

“You remember how he referred to the fact, that one free-thinking priest had even indulged in some sharp remarks to His Excellency.”

“Yes.”

“But perhaps you did not happen to discover that that priest’s name was Tuberózoff, and that he is here, in this very town where you are now stretched out and that you positively will not be in position to write anything about him.”

Bornovolókoff suddenly sprang up, and sitting on the bed, inquired:

“But how can you possibly know what the manager of the Chancellery said to me?”

"Why, very simply. I was walking softly behind you at the time. It does no harm to keep an eye on you, you know.— But that's not the point, at present, and you must understand that with that priest, Tuberózzoff we are going to begin our tactics, which, when they are developed, will demonstrate his noxiousness, and the noxiousness of all such independent men among the clergy; and, in the final summing-up, the logical deduction will be made to appear, that religion may be permitted only as one form of the administration. But as soon as faith becomes a serious faith, then it is pernicious, and it must be narrowed down and restricted. You will be the first to express this idea, and it will be repeated in connection with your name, as the ideas of Machiavelli and Metternich are repeated. Are you satisfied with me, my commander?"

"Yes."

"Do you empower me to act?"

"Yes."

"How am I to understand that 'yes'? Does it mean that you desire this?"

"Yes, I do."

"All right then! For, you know, with you 'yes' signifies both *yes* and *no*."

"Termosésoff withdrew from his superior's bed, and added:

"For you know, a slave like me cannot remain long inactive: the old grandmas don't tell our fortunes, as they tell yours, so that we turn straight from nihilists in satraps. I'll get busy for you and for myself; I'm tired of starving, and whichever way you try to advance, you meet with just one formula, 'a red,' and 'a red,' and no one wants to harbour you."

"Whitewash yourself."

"I haven't the means wherewith to buy the whitewash, sir."

"Why didn't you offer yourself in Petersburg as a spy?"

"I did go, sir, and offer myself," replied Termosésoff, brazenly, "but with our present realism, all the profitable open-

ings in that line were filled. They said I must first recommend myself in some way."

"Well, do it then."

"Give me a chance to show my capacities: otherwise I'll begin with you, by God I will!"

"Beast!" hissed Bornovolókoff.

"Mm-m-m-m-u-u-u!" bellowed Termosésoff loudly.

"What's that?"

"That? It's a black beast bellowing, demanding victuals, and inviting the white beast to be more polite to him," retorted Termosésoff.

Bornovolókoff gnashed his teeth with rage, and turned over in silence towards the wall.

"Aha! that's better! Submit, noble prince, and don't get puffed up over your whiteness, or I'll paint you in such fashion that you will come out grey-dark-brown-light-bay, with half-tones of sky-blue with speckles! Don't forget that I'm sent to thee as a chastisement, brother; I'm the thorn in the leaves of thy wreath. Wear me with respect."

The exhausted Bornovolókoff stifled a sigh, and feigned to be asleep, while the triumphant Termosésoff fell asleep in reality, without any feigning.

CHAPTER XI

WHILE the above-described scene was taking place between Madame Biziúkhin's newly-arrived guests, Dárya Nikoláevna herself, having called together all her servants was displaying a reinforced activity in the restoration of her apartments. Overjoyed by the permission to live in non-Spartan style, she had even decided to give a little party at which she would be able to display to her guests her full superiority over the society of the little town where she, a sensitive woman, full of life, was perishing uncomprehended and unvalued.

The work proceeded vigorously, at a furious pace: the rooms assumed a foppish air: Dárya Nikoláevna herself was working, and mounted on a chair, with her own hands caught up the puffs of the sumptuous white curtains lined with rose-colour at her bedroom windows.

The hanging of the curtains was barely accomplished, when from the dark storerooms there crawled forth to God's daylight other elegant things of many sorts; picture after picture made its appearance on the walls, an extremely elegant screen rose up before the fireplace, and on the chimney-piece itself was placed a black marble clock, with a star-shaped pendulum: the tables were covered with new and expensive cloths; lamps, porcelains, bronzes, statuettes and all sorts of trifles littered every spot in the bed-room and drawing-room where it was possible to set or insert them. All this imparted to the house the appearance of the quarters of a wealthy lady from the demi-monde, who receives things at hap-hazard, and without selection.

Just as this work was at full blast, schoolmaster Prepóten-sky made his entry, and exclaimed in amazement. Of course, he could not possibly approve of "All this chic." He even

failed rationally to understand how "a new woman" could—without having utterly lost her senses—display such audacity before the Petersburg promoters, and therefore, Prepótensky stood and stared at all this luxury with a sarcastic smile; but when Dárya Nikoláevna, without paying the slightest heed to him, boldly ordered her servants, in the schoolmaster's presence, to remove the linen covers from the furniture, Prepótensky could no longer contain his feelings, and inquired:

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

"Not in the least."

And again without paying any attention whatsoever to the astonished teacher, Madame Biziúkhin arranged to have the trellis covered with ivy, which had been carried out the day before, placed behind the divan; and began to arrange in front of the fireplace the most enchanting little nook with her best stuffed furniture.

"This is downright impudence!" exclaimed Prepótensky, and stepping to one side, he sat down and began to look over a new book.

"Just wait a bit, you'll catch it for that!" Dárya Nikoláevna said to him, by way of answer.

"I'll catch it? For what, ma'am?"

"For daring to reason differently."

"And from whom can I catch it, ma'am? Who can forbid me to have honourable ideas?"

But at that moment Termosésoff's cough became audible, and Madame Biziúkhin said to Prepótensky, curtly and decisively:

"Hearken to me—go away!"

This was so unexpected that he did not even understand the full severity of the words and she was obliged to repeat her command to him.

"What do you mean by 'go away'?" questioned the astounded Prepótensky in return.

"Just that, it's very simple. I don't want you to come to my house any more."

"No—listen . . . but are you really in earnest?"

"I couldn't be more so."

A fresh movement became audible in the chamber of the visitors.

"I request you to leave the house, Prepótensky!" exclaimed Madame Biziúkhin impatiently. "You hear me—leave the house!"

"No, permit me, I'm not in the way, you know!"

"No, that's not true, you are in the way."

"But in that case I may reform."

"No, you can't reform," insisted the hostess, with impatient wrath, as she tried to jerk her visitor from his chair.

But Prepótensky also displayed firmness of character, and calmly but stubbornly demanded an explanation, as to why she denied him the capacity for reforming himself.

"Because you're a downright fool!" exclaimed Madame Biziúkhin at last, in a perfect fury.

"Ah, that's another matter," replied Prepótensky rising from his seat,—“but, in that case, permit me to take my bones. . . .”

"Ask Yermóshka yonder for them; I gave them to him to throw away."

"He has thrown them away!" shrieked the teacher, and rushed into the kitchen, and when he returned, half an hour later, Dárya Nikoláevna was arrayed in such a dazzling toilet that the schoolmaster fairly reeled at the sight of her, and clutched at the stove for support.

"Ah! aren't you gone yet?" she asked him severely.

"No . . . I'm not gone, and I can't go . . . because your Yermóshka. . . ."

"Well, sir?"

"He has flung my bones into such a place that there is no longer any hope. . . ."

"O, yes, I see that you want to make a long story of it!" exclaimed Madame Biziúkhin in violent wrath, and seizing Prepótensky by the shoulders, she shoved him out into the vestibule. But at that same instant, on the threshold of the other door, Termoséssoff presented himself to the eyes of the combatants.

CHAPTER XII

“**B**A-BA-BA! What’s this expulsion?” he inquired of Madame Biziúkhin, as he rubbed his eyes, which were still somewhat bound with sleep.

“It’s nothing . . . this is a—stupid man who has been in the habit of coming to our house,” she replied, releasing Prepótensky.

“Then why are you turning him out now? Of what incivility has he been guilty?”

“Of absolutely none, of none whatever,” replied the schoolmaster.

“And who may you be?”

“Schoolmaster Prepótensky.”

“How have you irritated her?”

“In no way, sir, in no way at all.”

“Well, then, come back and I’ll make peace between you.”

Prepótensky immediately came back.

“Why do you assert that he is stupid?” Termosésoff asked Madame Biziúkhin, as he held the teacher firmly by both hands. “I don’t discern anything of the sort in him.”

“Why, of course, sir, believe me, I’m decidedly not stupid,” replied Varnáva with a smile.

“I believe you fully, and I don’t approve of Madame, my hostess, treating you in this way. But let her make up for it by giving me a peace-tea. I sometimes drink tea as soon as I wake up.”

The hostess left the room to see about the tea.

“And now, my dear fellow, the schoolmaster, let’s you and I have a good chat! I perceive that you are a very good, easy-going man,” began Termosésoff, when he was left alone with him, and in five minutes, he had made Varnáva narrate

to him all his woeful situation at home and abroad, neither his mother, nor his bones, nor Akhilla nor Tuberózoff being forgotten, and at the name of Tuberózoff Termosésoff redoubled his attention: then he narrated the tale of Deacon Akhilla's recent matutinal conflict with Commissioner Danílka.

This last tale made Termosésoff grunt, and slapping Prepótensky on the knee, he said softly:

"Now, listen to me, professor, I commission you to fetch that citizen Danílka to me tomorrow morning, without fail."

"Do you mean Danílka?"

"Yes; the man the deacon insulted."

"Goodness me, that's the easiest thing in the world!"

"Then fetch him!"

"He shall be here before dawn."

"Exactly so, before dawn. Yes, I see that you are a fine, dashing fellow, Prepótensky!" praised Termosésoff, and turning to Madame Biziúkhin, who entered at this juncture, he added: "Yes, I'm greatly pleased with him, and if he will make me acquainted with priest Tuberózoff I'll even call him a thoroughly clever fellow!"

"I can't endure him, and I don't advise you to make his acquaintance," stammered Varnáva, "but if you deem it necessary. . . ."

"It is, my friend, it is necessary."

"In that case, let us go to the Commissioner of Police this evening, and there you will make the acquaintance of all our people."

"All right; I'll go anywhere you like, only I must be invited."

"Oh, nothing is easier to manage," interrupted the school-master, and he set forth the simplest sort of a plan,—that he should go at once to the Commissioner of Police, and tell him, in Dárya Nikoláevna's name, that she begged permission to call in the evening with her newly-arrived guest.

"Come hither, Prepótensky, and let me embrace you!" cried Termosésoff.

"Yes, sir," pursued the joyful teacher. "And he will be

delighted to have the new guest at his house, and there you will meet, at one swoop, not only Tuberózoff, but also that revolting Akhilla, and the Marshal of Nobility."

"Prepótensky! Come hither, and let me kiss thee!" cried Termosésoff, and when the schoolmaster rose and went to him, he actually did kiss him, and wheeling him round to the left, he said. "Go and act!"

Proud and thoroughly captivated on the score of his reputation, Prepótensky seized his cap and fled away.

At the end of an hour, which had been spent by Termosésoff in conversation with Madame Biziúkhin on the theme, that not a single fool in the world should be made to feel that he is stupid the teacher re-appeared, with an invitation for the whole party to spend the evening at Porókhontzeff's, and to this he added:

"And as for the citizen Danílka, in whom you are interested, I have hunted him up and he is standing at the gate this moment."

Termosésoff, having once more encouraged Varnáva with all sorts of eulogiums, rose, and taking the schoolmaster with him, ordered him to conduct him to some retired spot, and bring Danílka thither.

Prepótensky led Izmáil Petróvitch to the excise-man's deserted office, and set before him the citizen required.

"Good day, citizen," Termosésoff greeted Danílka. "How did the deacon here insult you a few mornings ago?"

"He didn't insult me at all."

"He didn't? Just you tell me everything straight out, boldly and frankly, as though to a priest in confession, for I'm a friend of the people, and not their enemy. Did Deacon Akhilla insult you?"

"No, there was no insult. We have already settled all that between ourselves."

"How is it possible to settle all that? He led you through the streets by the ear, didn't he?"

"Well, and what if he did? It was all nonsense."

"Nonsense? It was an insult. Just reflect, citizen, surely, he pulled your ears?"

"All that was mere mischief, and we don't reckon that an insult among ourselves."

"What, you don't, citizen? How can you help reckoning it an insult? I am told that it was done almost publicly."

"Yes, sir, it was done publicly."

"Then you ought to make a complaint about it."

"To whom, sir?"

"Why, to this Prince who has come here with me."

"Exactly so, sir."

"Does that mean that you will or will not make a complaint?"

"But on what subject am I to complain, sir?"

"He will be condemned to a fine of one hundred rubles—that's the point."

"That's so."

"So you agree. Well, and you ought to have done it long ago, Prepótensky! Sit down and write what I dictate."

And Termoséssoff began to dictate to Prepótensky a petition addressed to Bornovolókoff,—a decidedly brief but tricky petition, in which the name of the Archpriest was not forgotten as an inciter of violence, and as having even said to him, Danílka, that he had got from the deacon exactly what he deserved."

"Sign that, citizen!" shouted Termoséssoff to Danílka, when Prepótensky had written the last line."

Danílka gave a start.

"Sign, sign!" urged Termoséssoff, thrusting the pen into his hand by main force; but the "citizen" suddenly replied that he would not sign the complaint.

"Why will you not?"

"Because I don't agree to it, sir."

"You don't agree to it? Devil take you, what do you mean by this? First you remain dumb, and when the petition has been written for you, gratis, then you don't consent."

"I don't consent, sir."

"Are you trying to make me give you a ruble for signing it? You're greedy, my good man. Sign this very instant!"

And Termosésoff, seizing him angrily by the collar, dragged him to the table.

"I . . . as your graciousness pleases, but I won't sign," gasped the citizen, deliberately dropping the pen on the floor.

"I'll give you 'as my graciousness pleases!' Isn't your graciousness pleased to receive from me ten blows across the phiz?"

"The frightened 'citizen' recoiled with his whole body, and stammered:

"Your High-Born, have mercy, don't force me! Nothing will come of my petition, anyway."

"Why not?"

"Because I have already tried once to make a petition, when the Prince's manager Glitch whipped me with nettles for having gone on a bet to steal the Commissioner of Police's horse, but everybody advised me against it: 'don't do it, Danílka,' they said, 'they'll write a general denunciation of you, and we will all say that you ought to have been exiled to Siberia long ago.' Yes, sir, I myself felt well enough, that it was not fitting for me to stand up for my honour."

"You may argue any way you like yourself about your honour. . . ."

"And the officials here all know it, too. . . ."

"I don't care if all your officials here do know it, but we don't belong here, we are from Petersburg. Do you understand?—from the Capital itself, from Petersburg, and I order you to sign this very instant, you thrice-accursed rascal, without any arguing,—or . . . off you fly to Siberia without any denunciation!"

And thereupon, the powerful Termosésoff so squeezed Danílka with one hand by the arm and with the other by the throat, that the latter, in an instant, grew as red as a boiled crab, and almost gave the deathrattle.

"For the Lord's sake, release me! I'll sign anything you like."

And then, hawking and shrinking, he scrawled his name at the bottom of the complaint.

Termosésoff immediately put this document in his pocket, and thrusting his clenched fist beneath Danílka's nose, he said, menacingly:

"Citizen, if you babble to any one before the proper time, that you have sent in a petition, then. . . ."

Danílka, continuing to cough, only waved his thoroughly benumbed arm.

"Then I'll lay open your whole phiz, you good for nothing rascal, I'll multiply one cheek by the other cheek, I'll subtract your nose, and I'll concoct your teeth into bird-shot."

The citizen now waved both hands.

"Well, and now you've done enough hawking here. Allez marchir to the door!" ordered Termosésoff, removing the hook which he had dropped to fasten the door, and he accelerated Danílka's progress across the threshold to such an extent, that the latter flew higher than the hen-house enclosed next the porch, and landing from his flight on the warm grass, merely glanced about him, then spat; and having lost even his hawking cough, crawled out of the gate on all fours.

Prepótenky, beholding his chastisement, rejoiced greatly, and clapped his hands.

"Why do you do that?" inquired Termosésoff.

"You are stronger than Akhílka! With you, I'm no longer afraid of him."

"Well, you needn't be."

CHAPTER XIII

THE twilight descended upon the town, casting a gleam on the street leading from the house of the excise man to the house of the Commissioner of Police, on a dashing tróika, which was of a very different type from the one that had transported thither in the morning the Plodomássoff dwarfs. In the middle, exactly resembling a wild pacer of the steppe, curvetting and rearing, with her little head thrown back, walked Madame Biziúkhin; on her right, with his cap on the back of his head, crowded Termoséssoff, while on the left, Prepótensky wagged his legs and shook his head. Like a tróika made up from villagers' horses, one from a courtyard, another from a back-yard, and the third from the priest's cattle-pen; one dances, another leaps, and the third sings ditties. But there is no discord, and all of them, though uneven in gait, are dragging one and the same cart to one and the same goal.

This goal is known to Termoséssoff alone; he alone is working not because of trifles, and is making the teacher, and the wife of the exciseman serve him, but they are all equally merry. If Termoséssoff knows whereat his bold and enterprising soul is exulting, still the hearts of Dárya Nikoláevna and Prepótensky are not leaping for nothing. Both these individuals are having a foretaste of bliss which has taken possession of them—they are preparing to enjoy an encounter between Gog and Magog,—between Tuberózoff and Termoséssoff.

How will the clever, all-conquering newcomer set about this, and who will remain in possession of the field in the unequal combat?

You may say what you please, but this is, really, an interesting question!

PART THREE

CHAPTER I

BEFORE Termoséssoff and his company reached the rout at the Commissioner of Police Tuberózoff had already spent more than an hour in solitary conversation with Marshal of the Nobility Tugánoff. The old archpriest had complained to the important guest about the same thing of which he had complained in his Diary, with which we are acquainted, and had received in reply the same old jests.

"What will come of all this vacillation?" had asked the archpriest, contracting his brows; and the Marshal of Nobility laughingly answered him:

"It hath not been revealed what shall be, my dear friend."

"Without ideals, without faith, without reverence for the deeds of our great ancestors. . . . This—this will cause Russia to perish."

"Well if it be necessary that she should perish, perish she will," replied Tugánoff indifferently, and added, as he rose from his seat:—"but, meanwhile, see here: let's go to the guests. You and I shall never talk to any purpose; you're a maniac."

The archpriest stopped short, and with a shade of offence in his voice, inquired: "Why am I a maniac?"

"Well, why do you harass every one, why do you bother every one with 'ideals, faith'? It can't be helped, brother, that, evidently, the time for all that sort of thing has gone by."

Tuberózoff smiled, and, sighing, answered gently, that the time for faith and ideals had not gone by, but merely the *time for words*.

"Perform *deeds*, brother."

"There are few deeds, either, now-a-days."

"What is necessary?"

"Feats."

"Perform feats.— But in what spirit?"

"In a strong spirit, with stormy breath. . . . Let the very extinguishers burst into flame!"

"Yes, yes, yes! You want to quarrel! No, Father, better reconcile yourself."

"Parmén Semyónovitch, I hear a great deal, sir, now-a-days, about reconciling oneself. What sort of reconciliation or peace is that where no pardon is asked? That sort of peace is good for nothing, and not for nothing did our forbears bequeath to us the saying: 'Don't drink to a treaty of peace until you have thrashed your adversary.'"

"He must be thrashed, without fail!"

"Why not? He certainly must be thrashed!"

"You are a regular theological student, my dear fellow!"

"But I don't pretend to be nobly-born, you know."

"But why do you insist upon it that you want to suffer? That's not done for trifles, you know. You'd better save yourself up for some fine opportunity."

"There are plenty of the saving-up sort without me, and I must do my duty."

"Well, then, I will not try to dissuade you from doing your duty according to your conscience. Do it. Shame the shameless—you'll have to swallow insults, you'll win your spurs; but now let us go to the host and hostess, for I cannot remain here long."

The archpriest followed Tugánoff valiantly, but extremely discouraged. He had not expected anything of this sort from the interview; but then, he hardly knew what he had expected.

CHAPTER II

TERMOSÉSOFF, with Varnáva and the liberal excise-official's wife arrived at the party at the moment when Tugánoff and Tuberózoff had already passed through the hall, and were seated in the small drawing-room. The other guests had disposed themselves in the hall, where they were chatting, playing on the piano, and trying to sing something. Termosésoff, Madame Biziúkhin and Varnáva walked straight in upon them at this moment.

The hostess greeted them, and thanked Madame Biziúkhin for her guest, and Termosésoff for his unceremonious simplicity.

"We are simple people, and like simple people," she said to him.

"And I'm a simple man myself," replied Termosésoff, and thereupon bowed very low, smiled very affably, and even cracked his heels together.

On beholding this, Madame Biziúkhin was, in all conscience, far more encouraged by the worthy behaviour of Prepótenky, who stood there as stiffly as though he had swallowed a yardstick. Whether it happened by accident, or in virtue of the consideration that the newly-arrived guests were persons of a more serious type, for whom it would be unfitting to laugh with the young ladies, and listen to trivial stories and bad singing, the hostess led Termosésoff and Prepótenky straight into the small drawing-room where sat Tugánoff, the Plodomásoffs, Daryánoff, Savély, Zakhárya, and Akhílla.

Madame Biziúkhin could always get her bearings anywhere, but she lacked the audacity to penetrate into the drawing-room in the wake of her cavaliers, and she did not care to make friends with the ladies, so she sat down near the door.

The drawing-room which Prepótensky and Termosésoff had entered was a small room; at one end of it stood a divan with a table in front of it, at which Tugánoff and Tuberózoff had seated themselves, and round about, on chairs, sat the meek Benefáktoff, Daryánoff and the district Marshal of Nobility, Plodomásoff. Akhílla was not seated, but was standing behind an empty armchair, clutching the carving in his hand. Madame Biziúkhin saw that Termosésoff, as he entered the drawing-room, made a most respectful bow, and—what no one, probably could have foreseen,—he suddenly strode up to Tuberózoff and asked him for his blessing. Father Savély himself was, of course, more amazed than all the rest by this; he could not even decide what to do, on the spur of the moment, and bestowed the requested blessing on Termosésoff with evident embarrassment. But when, in addition, Termosésoff tried to kiss his hand, it so dazed the archpriest that he hastily lowered his hand and Termosésoff's with a powerful movement, and heartily shook that treacherous hand, as though it had been that of his best friend.

Termosésoff wished to receive a blessing from Zakháriya also, but the meek Benefáktoff, on this occasion, showed more presence of mind than Tuberózoff—he not only bestowed the blessing, but without the slightest hesitation, himself raised his little yellow hand to the lips of the swindler.

Termosésoff, having now got wound up to go, started toward Akhílla for another blessing, but Akhílla, with a bold scrape of his foot, said to the visitor:

“I am a deacon, sir.”

Thereupon, they pressed each other's hands, and Akhílla invited Termosésoff to seat himself in the armchair behind which he was standing; but Termosésoff courteously declined that honour, and sat down on the nearest chair, beside Father Zakháriya, while true to the laws of his routine school, Prepótensky walked off as far as possible, and seated himself opposite the open door into the hall.

By this choice of position he proved, in the first place, that he did not wish to mingle with the world, and in the second

place, from that point, he could see Madame Biziúkhin: she, in her turn, would be able to hear everything he might say. The schoolmaster felt, and recognized the necessity of raising the value of his stock, which had been fluctuating ever since the arrival of Termosésóff, and now having seated himself, he was only waiting for the first pretext to start up a discussion, and demonstrate to Madame Biziúkhin the superiority of his mind, and, at all events, the purity of his tendencies. To the seeker of a quarrel any word may serve for pretext and Varnáva did not languish long in silence.

CHAPTER III

AS the new arrivals entered, Marshal of Nobility Plodomásoff was telling Tuberózoff about contemporary reforms in the clergy, and he resumed his narrative as soon as Termoséssoff and Varnáva had seated themselves.

The district Marshal of Nobility was a champion of reform, and so was Tugánoff, but the latter interpolated the remark that when he had seen the Bishop, on the preceding day, His Grace had expressed himself very cautiously, and had said, among other things, that with the cessation of inheritance in the priesthood,¹ the most pure-blooded Russian stock was being exterminated.

"What does that mean, sir?" queried Zakháriya, with curiosity.

Tugánoff explained to him, that this hint as to the unmingled Russian stock among the clergy referred to that class having no mixed marriages. Zakháriya did not understand, and Tugánoff was obliged to help him.

"The point is simply this," he said,—“that all ecclesiastics have married persons of that same class. . . .”

"Yes, they have."

"And all ecclesiastics are Russians."

"Yes."

"Well, it follows that, in the clergy, the blood is pure Russian, while every one else has his blood mixed with that of foreigners: Poles, Tatárs, Germans, Swedes, —and even Jews."

"Aï, aï, aï, even with that of Jews! Fie! how nasty," ejaculated Zakháriya, and spat.

¹ Formerly, the sons of priests became priests (as a rule), and married the daughter of a deceased priest, taking his parish by way of dowry, that the latter's family (who lived with him) might be supported.

TRANSLATOR.

"Yes, and the Swedes also are 'hard-headed'; it's a pretty tough matter to meddle with them!" Akhílla backed him up.

The archpriest appeared to be afraid that the deacon might say something inappropriate, and with the object of putting an end to this conversation about nationality, he interposed:

"Yes; our Bishop is not a man of poor wit."

"He has even written about some 'milk' or other," remarked Prepótensky from his distant post, but no one answered his words.

"And he is a great humourist," pursued Tugánoff. "They've set up a new little gendarme, the freedom of whose behaviour is without limit, and he thinks he can do anything."

"Yes, that's the way of it; the gendarmes can do anything," Prepótensky gave tongue again, and again no one noticed him.

"That little gentleman found out," continued Tugánoff, "that no one has ever dined with the Bishop, and he made a bet at the Club with the Chief of Police, that he would dine with him, and unfortunately, the old man heard of it. . . ."

"Aï, aï, aï!" drawled Zakháriya.

"Well, sir; so that cavalryman went to call on him, and sat, and sat, just as he was when he came from the mass, and sat. At last, he could hold out no longer, and at six o'clock in the evening he began to take his leave. And the taciturn Bishop who, up to that time, had been steadily listening to him, and saying nothing, said: "You might have dined with me, if you could have stayed a little longer." Well, the fellow pricked up his ears higher than the crown of his head; he had won his bet. The Bishop kept him waiting another hour, and then conducted him to the table.

"Ah, he need not have done it," said Zakháriya, "he need not have done it."

"Pardon me; they entered the dining-room, the Bishop took his stand before the holy picture, and began to recite prayer after prayer. Another hour elapsed: the famished guest was almost ready to drop on the floor.— 'Well, now, serve dinner,' said the Bishop. They served two tiny plates of pea-soup with rusks, and no sooner had the officer thus whetted

his appetite, than the Bishop rose again. 'Now let us return thanks to the Lord God for our meal,' said he. But this time, when he began to recite prayers, that gallant young fellow did not wait for the end, but quietly slunk out, and ran away. The old man told me about it yesterday, and laughed:—"This spirit," said he, 'goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.'"

"He is both witty and a man of refined and agreeable manners," let fall Tuberózoff, as though this anecdotal conversation oppressed him.

"Yes, but he also groans and complains *that there are no men*. 'We are floating,' he says, 'over a deep abyss, in an unseaworthy vessel, and with drunken sailors. God preserve us from a storm during our voyage!'"

"A trite saying," remarked Tuberózoff.

"However," began Tugánoff again, "he remarked concerning your town, that things are solid here. 'I have two priests there,' said he, 'one clever, the other pious.'"

"The clever one is Father Savély," remarked Zakháriya.

"Why are you convinced that the clever one is inevitably Father Savély?"

"Because . . . he is wise," replied Benefáktoff, abashed.

"And Father Zakháriya came out in the second rank," prompted the deacon.

Tuberózoff shook his head at him in reproof. Akhílla hastened to repair his mistake, and said:

"Father Zakháriya is pious—and the Bishop ought to have said, also, that there have been no complaints against Father Zakháriya."

"No, there have been no complaints against me," sighed Zakháriya."

"But Father Savély is an uneasy man," jested Tugánoff.

This moment presented itself to Prepótensky as extremely propitious, and not letting it slip, he immediately announced that uneasy men in the priesthood meant informers, for the religious conscience ought to be free. Tugánoff was so incautious as to answer Prepótensky, that freedom of conscience is

indispensable, and that it was a great pity it did not exist among us.

"Yes, our poor Church is subject to vain censure from all quarters because of this," remarked Tuberózoff.

"Then what do you complain about?" Prepótensky attacked him vivaciously.

"We complain of lack of toleration," Tuberózoff answered him drily.

"You don't suffer from it."

"Yes, we do suffer woefully! You preach loudly and freely that there ought to be no faith, and nothing happens to you, but if we so much as whisper that it is necessary there should be nothing better than your teaching, then. . . ."

"But what is it you want?" interrupted the teacher.—
"You want them to hound us down, to destroy us."

"No, no, it is you who want us destroyed."

Prepótensky could hit upon no reply: he did not wish to deny this, but was afraid to confirm it outright. Tugánoff removed the difficulty by remarking that the father archpriest was merely incensed because there are people who make it their aim in life to ruin the faith in simple hearts.

"I am more incensed over the fact that this is successful through connivance."

Prepótensky smiled.

"It is successful," he said, "because faith is a luxury which costs the people dear."

"Well, but not dearer than their drunkenness," remarked Tugánoff dispassionately.

"But drinking, you know, is the diversion of Russia, it is national, and vodka anyway, is more useful than faith: it warms, at any rate."

Tuberózoff boiled with rage, and gripped the sleeves of his cassock very hard; but just then Tugánoff retorted that Prepótensky was mistaken, and pointed out that faith warms better than vodka, that our peasant begins all his good deeds after a prayer, and performs all his bad ones, for which he is exiled to Siberia, after drinking vodka.

"Besides that, excise-farming has been abolished by the economists," interrupted Prepótsky suddenly. "The economists asserted that the cheaper vodka was, the less of it would be drunk, and they lied. However, the economists did not lie; they know that what is needed to reduce drunkenness among the populace is not only that vodka should become cheaper. It is also necessary that many things should not go on as they are going now. And yet, it is not the economists who are striving for the new order of things, but only the 'new people.'"

"Yes, only those people are worthless, and the devil only knows what has been the result."

"Yes, they have been captured by spies."

"No, they are plain rascals."

"Ras-ca-a-als!"

"Yes; rascals always include in their usurpation all up-roars in which it is profitable for them to take a hand. We have had a lot of trouble for this long time past with those . . . nihilists, they're called, aren't they? The Government bothered itself about them at one time, and the people still bother about them—society and the press,—but it isn't these who have dropped them, it is just simply the rascals, who are calling them off to their enterprises. The rascals will outdo them, and then the revolution will come."

Prepótsky cast an agitated glance at Madame Biziúkhin. He was troubled because Tugánoff was absorbing his passion as a spring fog absorbs the mounds of snow in the fields.

Varnáva was seeking support, and in the hope of getting it, he turned his gaze on Termosésoff, but Termosésoff did not even look at him: on the other hand, deacon Akhílla, who had long been making signs to him with his hand to stop, said:

"Hold your tongue, Varnáva Vasílievitch; that's not a bit interesting!"

This exploded the schoolmaster—the more so, as even Tugánoff had wearied of his conversation. Prepótsky hurled himself headlong into the fray.

CHAPTER IV

THE schoolmaster sprang from his seat and rushed at Tugánoff, who was talking with Tuberózoff.

"Excuse me for interrupting you . . . but I must . . . I stand for freedom . . ."

"So do I," replied Tugánoff, turning again to the arch-priest.

"But permit me, sir, to finish my sentence," cried the teacher.

Tugánoff turned toward him.

"But do you know that freedom is not given, but is seized?" Varnáva asked him.

"Well, sir!"

"But who will seize it, if the new people are bad?"

"It will come about in the natural course of things."

"But, nevertheless, that signifies that it will not be given, but taken. I am right! I said so: it will be seized!"

"Well, he is telling you the very same thing," remarked deacon Akhílla from behind his chair.

"But it was I who said that: it will be seized!"

"And you are being told the very same thing," Termosésoff backed up the deacon, in the capacity of one who holds the same opinions.

"Parmén Semyónovitch is saying the very same thing to you," suggested Termosésoff, intentionally pronouncing Tugánoff's name as distinctly and cordially as possible.

"I must be going," interposed Tugánoff, coming from behind the table; and he tried to make his way out into the hall, but was again attacked by Varnáva.

"Permit me, just one word more," insisted the teacher. "It strikes me that you probably find it unpleasant that all men are now equal?"

"No sir, it does not please me that all men are not equal."

Prepótensky stopped short, and after waiting a second stammered:

"Why, that's a fact—all ought to be equal."

"But that is precisely what Pármen Semyónovitch is telling you—that all ought to be equal!" Termosésoff drove him away from the Marshal of Nobility on one side.

"Permit me, sir!" and Prepótensky darted up to him on the other side, but there Akhílla intervened.

"Stop that!" said he. "No matter what you say, it's all nonsense!"

"Ah, permit me, do me the favour to mind your own business, I'm not speaking to you." Prepótensky repulsed him, as he dashed up from the front.— "What I say, is that you probably like England because there are Lords there. . . . You are vexed and sorry because class privileges have disappeared."

"But have they disappeared?"

"Go away, you don't know anything," Akhílla dismissed Varnáva with a shove; but the latter ran around him, and again approaching the Marshal of Nobility from the front said:

"Several opinions may exist on every subject."

"But what is it you want with me?" exclaimed Tugánoff bursting into a laugh.

"I say . . . there may be different opinions."

"There will be only one sensible opinion, the other will be stupid," replied Termosésoff.

"One will be just, the other unjust," remarked the Marshal of Nobility, by way of making peace.

"Justice rests with God alone!" suggested the deacon.

"Between two points only one straight line can be drawn, and you can't draw a second," inculcated Termosésoff.

Prepótensky got fairly beside himself with wrath.

"But what do you mean? One cannot talk about a thing in this way, you know," he shouted. "I am alone, and you are all hanging together. By those tactics you can argue

down any one, I don't care who it is. But I know one thing—that I don't respect anything old."

"That's the very oldest thing of all. . . . When was history ever respected among us?"

"Come now, hearken to me! Hold your tongue, you fool!" Akhílla advised Varnáva, in friendly wise, while Madame Biziúkhin turned scornfully away from him. Termosésóff, as he brushed him out of the way, trod on his foot, which caused the schoolmaster (who had the weakness of raving, and of substituting one word for another, in moments of embarrassment) to exclaim:

"Oï, you've trodden on my cet porn!"¹

The "cet porn" raised a laugh, but by this time, Tugánoff had already taken his leave of the hostess.

The harness-bells jingled, and the six fresh horses drew Tugánoff's calash up to the porch, and on the threshold a stalwart haiduk, with an English travelling-bag slung across his shoulders, drew himself up in military fashion. The last minute of which Prepótensky could avail himself, to redeem his character, had arrived. He wrenched himself out of the hands of Termosésóff and Akhílla who were holding him, and hopping along with his "pet corn," he galloped up to the Marshal of Nobility, and inquired:

"Have you read Turgénieff's *Smoke*? . . . Turgénieff is a nobly-born writer, and he demonstrates that everything in Russia is smoke: Russians did not even invent the knout."

"Yes," replied Tugánoff, "we really did borrow the knout, but, on the other hand we have invented the emancipation of the serfs with the land ourselves. Point out that fact to Mr. Turgénieff."

"But the serfs and their land were taken away from the landed proprietors," said Prepótensky.

"Taken away? That's not true. To the Emperor belongs

¹ In the Russian, by changing the accent to another syllable, the word "corn" is made to have several entirely different meanings, including "bully." "Cet porn" is here adopted as the solution of an untranslatable joke. TRANSLATOR.

the honour of the initiative, but to the nobility belongs the glory of the sacrifice," retorted Tuberózoff, who could contain himself no longer.

"The command was issued, and the well-born nobility didn't dare disobey."

"But they did not want to disobey," retorted Tugánoff.

"All the same, the authorities took away the peasants."

"The authorities—and time. Alexander the Blessed¹ dreamed all his life of emancipating the serfs, but the thing would not go, and doesn't work yet with the Barons of the Baltic Provinces."

"Because the Germans are shrewd."

Tugánoff broke into a laugh, and putting out his hand to Tuberózoff, said to Varnáva, with a touch of scorn:

"I have the honour to bid you good evening."

"Never mind, sir, I shall be against the nobles anyway, and for natural right."

Prepótsky's uneasiness made every one smile, and Tugánoff, being quite ready for his journey, halted for a moment and said to him:

"The most natural form of life is this . . . this life here of these horses, which have been furnished me, but you see that they have been harnessed to draw a noble."

"And on the road they'll be strummed on with the knout, to make them go faster," remarked the deacon.

"And beasts are always beaten," confirmed Termosésóff.

"There you go again, all of you against one!" snorted the schoolmaster, and wound up with the statement that, nevertheless, he would always oppose the nobility.

"Well, that means that you're a mischief-maker," said Akhilla.

"Deep calleth unto deep," remarked Zakháriya.

"But do you happen to know what deep calleth unto deep?" snarled Varnáva. "That's written against you.— Deep calleth unto deep means—a priest invites a priest to visit him."

¹ Alexander I. TRANSLATOR.

This struck every one as amusing, and a hearty peal of laughter filled the hall.

Tuberózoff alone darted wrathful gleams from his eyes, and abruptly plucking at the ribbon from which his pectoral cross was suspended, went out into the drawing-room.

"Your old man has become a perfect maniac," said Tugánoff, nodding his head after him.

"Don't mention it. He receives the newspapers, and fusses over them, and sighs, and can't discuss anything coolly," replied Daryánoff.

"He'll hear you," whispered Akhílla softly. And Savély really had heard it all.

Tugánoff descended the steps and seated himself in his calash. He was escorted by the host and hostess, several of the guests, Varnáva and the archpriest. Varnáva felt strongly encouraged; it seemed to him that after the "deeps" his stock had taken a sudden rise, and with unexpected audacity he caught Tuberózoff by the sleeve, and said:

"Permit me to ask you something: the day before yesterday I was in church, and heard an archpriest utter the word, 'fool.' What ought the choir to chant in response when the archpriest makes the exclamation 'fool'?"¹

"The choir chants thrice: 'Schoolmaster Prepótsky,'" replied Savély.

At this unexpected retort those present were struck dumb for a second, and then suddenly burst into a frantic, universal roar of laughter. Tugánoff waved his hand and drove away in the most jocund frame of mind.

¹ In the church service the choir always responds when the priest makes an exclamation. TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER V

PREPÓTENSKY found himself, as the saying is, in a very awkward predicament. Even the tolerant ladies of the sort for whom only the process of talking is precious, and to whom it matters not what the men say, so long as they talk,—even they were perturbed. On the other hand, Termosésoff had acquired strength, and usurped universal attention. Before Varnáva had time to look about him, Termosésoff was chatting with all the ladies, and was simply paying wild court to the postmaster's wife; and paying court—in Prepótensky's opinion—badly, to the last degree: he was paying court to her not as to a woman, but as to a concealed power.

After supper, Termosésoff leaving the ladies, drew near to the men, and drank with all of them. And he drank in proper style—a good deal, but not enough to intoxicate him; and then, all of a sudden, he made up to Akhílla, Darayánoff and Father Zahkáriya. He spoke more than once to Tuberózoff, also, but the old man did not yield readily to the attempts at intimacy. On the other hand, Akhílla, after a chat lasting half an hour or an hour, unexpectedly, and to the amazement of all present, began to address Termosésoff as “thou,” pressed his hand, kissed his thick lips, and even made a pet name from his surname.

“By heaven, that Termosyóshka is a fine fellow,” drummed away the deacon to every one: “just see how he and I together dressed down Varnávka a while ago. Didn't we? Thou hadst better not go away from us at all, brother Termosyóshka. What conditions equal to these canst thou have off there in Petersburg? But here thou shalt hunt foxes with me in winter. Splendid, brother, isn't it?”

"Yes, yes," replied Termosésoff, and began to praise Akhílla, and called him a splendid fellow. And the two splendid fellows exchanged kisses.

When the feast neared its end, and Zakháriya and Tuberózoff had already gone home, Termosésoff plucked Akhílla by the sleeve, and said:

"You aren't in a hurry to be off anywhere, are you?"

"No, not particularly."

"Wait, then, and we'll go together!"

Akhílla agreed. Termosésoff proposed that they dance a little longer, to the piano, and danced first with the postmaster's wife, then with her daughters, then with two or three other ladies and last of all, after all the rest, with Madame Biziúkhin; and, as a wind-up to the whole, clasped the deacon in his arms, and waltzed round with him. When he seated him again in his place, as though he had been a lady, he raised his hand to his lips, and kissed his own hand.

Akhílla, who was unprepared for this, was covered with confusion, and hastily tore his hand away from Termosésoff, but the latter laughed at him, and said:

"Is it possible that thou thoughtest I would kiss thy coachman's paw?"

The deacon was offended, and said to himself: "Okh, apparently I ought not to have struck up a friendship with him!" But as they all set out for home immediately after this, he did not separate himself from the company. The postmaster's family, the deacon, Varnáva, Termosésoff and Madame Biziúkhin walked together. They escorted the postmaster's wife and daughters home, and there, on the very threshold of the house, Akhílla heard the lady say to Termosésoff:

"I hope that we shall meet again."

"Have no doubt as to that," replied Termosésoff, adding: "You said, did you not, that it pleased you to see the portraits of all the Imperial Family on the wall?"

"Yes, I want some myself very, very much."

"Well, I'll arrange it for you tomorrow."

And they parted.

It was about two o'clock in the morning, which, of course, was very late indeed for a provincial town, and as Prepóten-sky crawled along he meditated in what manner he might most successfully reach home—that is to say, whether it would be better for him to steal away quietly so that Akhílla would not notice him, or whether, on the contrary, he had better trust himself to the latter's magnanimity, for Varnáva had read somewhere that, among the Tcherkessians of the Caucasus, the only way to save oneself is to entrust oneself to the magnanimity of the enemy, and now, for some reason or other, he was inclined to the idea of judging Akhílla in Tcherkess fashion.

But before he had arrived at any definite conclusion, Termosésoff changed all this.

CHAPTER VI

NO sooner had they parted from the postmaster's wife, than Termosésoff announced that they all positively must drop in for a moment with him at Madame Biziúkhin's. "Do you permit us?" he said, half-turning to his hostess.

It was disagreeable to her, but she gave permission.

"Have you anything to drink in the house?"

Madame Biziúkhin was embarrassed. As luck would have it, she had forgotten to send for wine that day, and now she remembered that the last bottle of sherry had been removed from the table after dinner almost empty. Termosésoff noticed her embarrassment, and said:

"Well at least you have beer?"

"Of course."

"I know that excise officials always have beer on hand. And have you mead?"

"Yes, there is mead also."

"Well, that's fine: we have beer and mead, gentlemen, and from them I will concoct you such a lampopó that. . . ." Termosésoff kissed his fingers, and wound up:—"You'll swallow you're own tongues when you have finished it off."

"What's lanpopó?" inquired Akhílla.

"Not lanpopó, but lampopó is a beverage made from beer and mead. Come on!" and he plucked Akhílla by the sleeve.

"Hold on a bit," the deacon defended himself. "What sort of stuff is that lampopó? At funerals we drink something called 'beermead.'"

"But I tell you that this won't be 'beermead,' but lampopó! Come on!"

"No, stop," Akhílla again defended himself. "I know that

beermead. . . . It knocks you right off your feet, my dear fellow. I won't drink it on any terms."

"I tell you it will be lampopó, and not beermead."

"It would be better not to take any today," replied the deacon, "or my attic will be bursting tomorrow."

Prepótensky was of the same opinion but as neither Akhilla nor Prepótensky possessed sufficient firmness of character to hold his own, Termosésoff insisted on having his way, and bore them off to Madame Biziúkhin's house. According to the idea of the leader, the "drinking-bout" must take place in the garden arbour, and a multitude of bottles of beer and mead made their appearance and Termosésoff instantly began to concoct the beverage.

Varnáva Prepótensky placed himself beside Termosésoff. The teacher was desirous of coming to an explanation with Termosésoff, without the slightest delay, as to why he had fawned on Tugánoff, and helped to oppress him, Varnáva.

To the amazement of Prepótensky, Termosésoff had lost all desire to chatter with him, and instead of making some sort of gracious reply, snapped him up very impatiently:

"All men are alike to me, bourgeois and nobles, and men of the black hundred." Let me alone now with your politics, I want to drink!"

"But you must admit that men with a seminary educational are the best," stammered Varnáva, mixing up his words.

"Well, then," interrupted Termosésoff, "there is your 'cet porn' a while ago, and now you say 'seminary educational'—There's a Cicero for you!"

"He often does that when he gets excited. He wants to say one word, and says quite a different one," Akhilla defended Prepótensky, and thereupon proceeded to explain that because of this peculiarity the teacher had come very near losing a good acquaintance, because once he had tried to say to a lady: 'Matryóna Ivánovna, give me a slice of lemon,' but had suddenly said instead: 'Limóna Ivánovna, give me a slice of Matryóna.' And the lady had taken it as an insult."

Termosésoff fairly shouted with mirthful laughter, but sud-

denly seizing Varnáva by the hand he bent his head towards him, and whispered:

"Go, at once, and write down for me a memorandum of that conversation which we heard from the priests and the nobles. You understand—about the time having passed, and what Alexander I. could not do, and what is not successful at the present time in the Baltic Provinces. . . . In a word, everything, everything. . . ."

"But why go into details?" wondered the teacher.

"Well, that's none of your business. You go and write it as quick as you can, and then you'll see what it's for. We'll sign it, and send it to the proper place."

"What do you mean? What are you going to do?" cried Prepótensky aloud, wringing his hands in despair.—"A denunciation? Not for anything in the world!"

"But you hate them, don't you?"

"Well, and what if I do?"

"Then cut their throats if you hate them!"

"Yes, I'm willing to cut their throats, if you like, but—I'm not enough of a scoundrel to denounce people."

"Well, then, get out of here," Termosésoff interrupted him, pushing him towards the door.

"Aha! 'Get out!' . . . that means that I've found you out; you're in league with that hateful Akhílla!"

"Get out!"

"Yes, sir, yes, sir. You invited me to lampopó, and instead of that . . ."

"Yes, here's your lampopó for you!" retorted Termosésoff, and giving Prepótensky a rap on the nape of his neck, he kicked him out of the door, and shot the bolt after him.

Akhílla, who had looked on at this whole scene, was taken aback, and rising from his seat, he picked up his hat.

"What's the matter with you? Where are you off for?" Termosésoff asked him, seating himself again at the table.

"No—you must excuse me. . . . I'm going home."

"Drink the rest of your lampopó."

"No; I don't care what becomes of it, I won't. Good-bye;

I have the honour to bid you good-night!" and he offered his hand; but Termosésoff, without giving his hand, snatched Akhílla's hat from him, and flinging it under his chair, shouted: "Sit down!"

"No, I won't," replied the deacon.

"Sit down, I tell you," roared Termosésoff more loudly than before, and gave Akhílla such a jerk that he fell, slapdash upon a stool.

"Do you want to become a priest?"

"No, I don't," replied the deacon.

"Why don't you?"

"Because I'm not fitted for it, not worthy."

"But the archpriest insults you, doesn't he?"

"No, he doesn't."

"But I'm told that he took your walking-stick away from you?"

"Well, and what if he did?"

"And he called you a 'blockhead'?"

"I don't know—perhaps he did."

"We'll denounce him for what he said today."

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"That's what!"

And Termosésoff bending down, picked Akhílla's hat out from under the chair, and hurled it at the threshold.

"Well, I perceive that you are a Petersburg villain," remarked Akhílla, bending down to get his hat. But at that same moment, he unexpectedly received a stunning blow on the back of his head and found himself with his nose on the garden path, upon which, at the selfsame moment, his hat made its appearance; Prepótensky being a little further along, on his knees upon the path. The deacon did not even comprehend for a moment, how all this had come about, but desecrying Termosésoff in the doorway menacing him with a garden spade, he understood why the blow had been broad and heavy, and drawled out:

"So that's lampopó! Thank you for teaching me!"

And therewith, he turned to Varnáva, and said:

"Well? Let's go home now, brother!"

"I can't," replied Varnáva.

"Why?"

"I believe I have black and blue bruises all over my body, and my spead is fairly hlitting."

"Well if your spead is hlitting, your headache will pass off. Let's go home. I'll escort you," and the deacon compassionately lifted Varnáva to his feet, and led him to the exit from the garden. It was already growing light in the east.

On opening the garden-gate, Akhílla and Prepótensky unexpectedly came face to face with Mr. Biziúkhin.

The liberal excise official Biziúkhin, a tall and far from uncomely man, with an insignificant but not ill-natured face, had just returned from the district town. He looked at Akhílla and Varnáva Prepótensky, and remarked cheerily:

"Well, well, are you tipsy, my lads?"

"We are, brother," replied Akhílla. "I may say that we are downright drunk."

"What have they been treating you to, to put you in this state?" queried Biziúkhin curiously.

"Lampopó, my friend, is what they have been treating us to yonder. Go into the arbour: your share is waiting for you there."

"But who is there? My wife? And who is with her?"

"Dionysius, the Tyrant of Syracuse."

"Well, you certainly are pretty drunk! . . . A tyrant there, indeed! . . . And as for you, Varnáva Vasílievitch, you don't seem even to recognize people?" the excise man said to Varnáva.

"Excuse me," replied Prepótensky, bowing timidly, "I don't know you. I fecognize your race, but where I have remembered you I do not see."

"Poor fellow, he speaks very badly!" ejaculated the deacon, and dragged Varnáva from the hospitable premises.

A few minutes later, Akhílla successfully deposited Varnáva at his home, and handed him over to the altar-bread baker, who was amazed at the unwonted friendliness of the

deacon toward her son, and poured out a profusion of boundless thanks to him.

Akhílla made her no reply, and on reaching home, demanded from his Espérance, as quickly as possible, a copper ten-kopék piece.

"You have certainly banged yourself against something, father deacon," said the old woman curiously, when she saw Akhílla press the coin to the back of his head.

"Yes, Espérance, I have banged against something," he replied with a sigh, "but if you have thought, up to the present time, that I rely upon my strength, you need think so no longer. The father archpriest is the Minister of Justice; he spoke the truth to me, Espérance: 'let not the strong man boast of his strength, nor the mighty man of his power!'"

And Akhílla, dismissing his serving-woman, squatted down on his heels by the window, and continuing to groan, pressed the copper coin to the back of his head, as he whispered to himself:

"Such a lampopó has swelled up, that I shall not be able to show myself in the street for a couple of days."

CHAPTER VII

THE archpriest returned home greatly excited and disturbed. As he had stayed at the house of the Commissioner of Police a rather long time, owing to the festive occasion, his home-keeping little archpriestess, Natálya Nikoláevna, contrary to her usual habit, had not sat up for him, but had gone to bed, leaving the door open from her chamber into the parlour where her husband slept. Natálya Nikoláevna wished to make sure that she would wake up on her husband's return.

Tuberózoff understood this, and seeing the door open, went into his wife's bedroom, stepped up to her, and called her by name.

Natálya Nikoláevna awoke and answered.

"You are not asleep?"

"No, dearest Savély Yefímitch, I'm not asleep."

"That is well; I want to talk with you."

And the old man sat down on the edge of her bed, and began to repeat to his wife his conversation with the Marshal of Nobility, and then he began to complain about the general indifference to the conviction which was becoming disseminated everywhere throughout Russia, that for a cultivated man "it is a shame to be a believer." He set forth to his wife his various apprehensions as to the decline of morals, and the loss of a high ideal, and both as a man of faith, and as a citizen who loved his fatherland, and as a philosophical thinker, Father Savély at seventy years of age was fresh, clear, and strong: in his every word beamed forth sound sense, and every note of his voice resounded with cordial sincerity.

Natálya Nikoláevna did not interrupt the lofty and passionate speech of her husband by a single sound. He spoke with

perfect freedom, such as his position permitted to him in no other place.

"And just imagine, Natáša," he wound up, noting that daylight was beginning to appear, and that his canary, having waked up, was beginning to clean its bill against its perch:—"and just imagine, my dear old woman, that Tugánoff did not refute me on a single point, but agreed with me about everything, and he himself thought, as the late Márfa Andréevna used to say, that 'our bill is long, and that we stand like a snipe in a marsh, and sway back and forth: when we pull out our bill, our tail sticks fast, and when we pull out our tail our bill sticks fast': but he did not perceive what zeal such a position demands. . . . Frightful indifference!"

Natálya Nikoláevna preserved silence.

"And, to crown the whole, I was called 'a maniac'!—Now, please tell me, how can that appellation apply to me, and why?" Savély continued, lowering his voice. "I was called 'a maniac,' and he himself said it to me. . . . I put the question to him, that whether what I had been pointing out was petty or the reverse, yet are not all these things signs of the spirit which reigns in society? And if we do not deal with this trifling matter now, I said, then how can the big people expect to deal with it when it waxes great? . . . But to this he was pleased to reply, with that Russian jesting of ours which I detest, by imparting to me an anecdote, which really did fit the case very well indeed, but which, because of my calling, I cannot repeat to any one but you. He said there was some officer or other who, on entering a certain apartment during a campaign, noticed that he had as neighbour a woman of remarkable beauty, and fascinated by her appearance, following his regular custom, he immediately summoned his orderly, and said: 'My good fellow, how am I to get acquainted with that beauty?' But the orderly shifted from one foot to the other where he stood, and as the samovár was brought in at that moment, he suddenly exclaimed: 'There's a smell of smoke!' The officer sprang up, and rushed into the charmer's room, saying 'Aï, Madame, there's smell of smoke in our

house, and I have come to save you from the conflagration,' and so he got acquainted with her, and he made gifts to the orderly, and gave him plenty of vodka.

"But a good while afterward, that same admirer of beauty, on going to another place, caught sight of another beautiful lady, not alongside him this time, but opposite his window, on the other side of the street, and said to his orderly again: 'Akh, make me acquainted with that lady!' But the man had no more sense than to answer again. 'There's a smell of smoke!' and the officer perceived that he had made a mistake in trusting to the wits of his assistant, and on this second occasion, the desired acquaintance did not come about through him.—You may draw your own conclusions as to the analogy which appears from this: we reckon lack of faith as indispensable in an enlightened man, and ridicule of his native land in his estimate of men, neglect of the sanctity of the family ties, lack of fastidiousness, and our allegorical beauty, outward civilization, has been easily acquired . . . and that beauty sits opposite at her window, and how are we to get at her? We discuss it, and groan: 'Akh,' we say, 'how are we to get acquainted with her?' But what reply can incoherent orderlies make to this, except: 'There's a smell of smoke!' And of what use is that 'there's a smell of smoke?'"

"Yes," let fall Natálya Nikoláevna, with a sigh.

"That's exactly how the matter stands! So it is clear to you, also: who is the 'maniac' now? I, who, perceiving this more clearly, feel troubled, or those to whom all this is clear and comprehensible, but who look on everything unconcernedly: So long as it does not happen in our day, let everything go to perdition! That is what 'there's a smell of smoke' means. Isn't it, my dear?"

"Yes, dearest, that certainly must be the girl beginning to prepare the samovár!" said Natálya Nikoláevna hurriedly, in a sleepy voice.

Tuberózoff realized that all this time he had been talking to the air, which had no ears to hear him, and he bowed his white head and smiled.

He recalled the words which had been said to him, so long ago, by the noble-woman Márfa Plodomásóff: "And are not you alone? What if you do have a good wife who loves you, nevertheless, she cannot understand all that pains you. And so every one who sees a little further than his brother will be alone among his own people."

"Yes, I am alone! in every way alone!" whispered the old man. "And lo! the time when I have felt this most is the very time when I would not have wished to be alone, because . . . whether I am a maniac or not, still . . . I am resolved not to endure anything of this sort any longer, and what I am resolved upon, that I will carry out, even to the point of audacity. . . ."

And the old man rose softly from the bed, in order not to disturb the repose of his sleeping wife, made the sign of the cross over her, and having filled his pipe, went out with it and seated himself on the porch.

CHAPTER VIII

TUBEROZÓFF was filled with a great resolution as to a matter concerning which he had hesitated for a long time, which he had long been consumed with an earnest desire to accomplish, and of which he had not spoken to any one. And, indeed, with whom could he take counsel? To whom could he speak of that which he was meditating? Hardly to the meek Zakhárya, who 'is as though he were not'; hardly to the daring, Akhílla, who lives like an elemental force, without himself knowing why and to what he has been appointed; hardly to the officials, or to the ladies, or, in conclusion, even to Tugánoff, from whom he had expected support, as from a thoroughgoing Russian nobleman? No, there was no one, not even his blessed Natálya Nikoláevna, to whom the thought of smoke even in her sleep suggested nothing except the samovár. . . . "The darling, even in her sleep, is anxious, worries over one thing alone, how to keep me warm and supplied with warm beverages,—me, an old man,—and she does not know that I can be warmed by another ember, which burns within me, and that only a living stream can quench, with sovereign power, the spiritual thirst, which cannot be assuaged at the mere thought that I, old . . . grey-haired . . . half-dead . . . shall die as a prostrate stone . . . and that I am losing the consolation of saying to myself before my death, that . . . I have striven, at any rate, to fulfil my power and . . . and arouse the sinking spirits of my colleagues!"

The old man fell into thought. The delicate streams of tobacco-smoke fluttered forth from beneath his grey moustache, and as they were wafted through the air, were coloured by the amber-hued rays of the rising sun; the chickens flew down

from their roosts, and emerging from the coop, shook themselves and preened their feathers. And lo! on the bridge, the cattle-herd began to blow his linden-wood pipe; along the shore, an empty pail rattled against the yoke on the shoulders of a bare-footed peasant woman; the cows began to low, and the archpriest's own serving-woman drove his little cow through the gate of the hedge of plaited branches, making the sign of the cross over her yawning mouth as she did so; the canary-bird began to trill in the window, and day came in all its brilliance.

Then the church bell began to ring.

Tuberózoff called his man, and sent him for chanter Pavliukhán.

Yes, the archpriest reasoned with himself: "I must get away from myself, I imperatively must get away from myself, and . . . abandon my carefulness about many things. I will try to do so."

On the threshold of the wicket-gate a young gipsy made her appearance, with a baby at her breast, and another child on her back, and with three more children clinging to her rags.

"Give me something, Sir Father, happy, and talented!" she attacked Savély.

"What shall I give thee, thou unhappy and ill-fated woman? My wife is asleep, and I have no money."

"Give me something which you do not need; in return you shall have honour and good luck."

"What is there that I do not need? Ah, ah! You have spoken well:—there is something which I do not need!"

And Tuberózoff went into the house, and brought thence his tchibouk with the pipes, a pearl-bead pouch full of tobacco, and a tin box, into which he scraped out the ashes, and gave the whole to the gipsy, and said:

"Take this, gipsy, and give it all to your gipsy man—it is more fitting for him."

Natálya Nikoláevna was still asleep, and the archpriest blamed himself for it, because he had prevented her getting to sleep, for a long time, first by his presence, then by his re-

marks, which she had listened to, but which, nevertheless, had not waked her up.

He went to the stable, and with his own hands gave a double portion of oats to his pair of little brown horses, and was passing softly through the yard into the house, when he suddenly and unexpectedly beheld the soldier whom excise-man Biziúkhin despatched on his errands, entering his gate. The soldier carried a book. The archpriest took from his hand the receipt-book and on opening it, he turned scarlet all over. In it lay an envelope on which was written the following address: "To the Ecclesiastical Superintendent of the Stáry Górod District, Archpriest Savély Tuberkuloff." The word "Tuberkuloff" was slightly cancelled, and above it was written: "Tuberózoff."

"My orders are to return a receipt immediately," said the soldier.

"Who gave you the order?"

"The secretary of that official, who has just arrived."

"Well, he can wait."

The archpriest understood that this had not happened accidentally, that they were trying to make him angry, and, probably, had found something wherewith to pick a quarrel.

"What can it be? And so early . . . surely, they cannot have slept at all last night, busy as they were with some sort of villainy . . . They're adroit men!"

As Tuberózoff reflected in this manner, he stepped into his little drawing-room all flooded with sunlight, and donning his round-eyed silver spectacles, he unsealed the curious envelope.

CHAPTER IX

THE critical paper was somewhat lacking in the formality with which the language of the chancellery abounds, in unpleasant quibbling expressions. Ecclesiastical Superintendent Tuberózoff was not precisely invited nor yet precisely ordered "confidentially" to official Bornovolókoff, "to furnish an explanation concerning important questions, and also concerning the scandalous and unbecoming deeds of Deacon Akhílla Desnítzin."

"Phew, deuce take you, is not this some sort of a very stupid joke? . . . Is it possible that they have taken it into their heads to jest with me in this manner? But no, this is not a jest: 'Tuberkuloff' . . . My surname has been distorted with the manifest intention of insulting me, and . . . then again, 'the scandalous and unbecoming behaviour' of Akhílla! What does it all mean, and what sort of a scheme are they forging? . . . In order not to give them pleasure, and to avoid falling into error, let us try the waiting method, which is the only sensible one in obscure cases."

The archpriest took up his pen, and beneath the text of the informal document, he wrote: "Ecclesiastical Superintendent Tuberózoff not having the honour to be acquainted with the powers of the person who demands his presence, cannot regard presenting himself in response to this summons or invitation, as among the number of his obligations," and then, having placed this paper in the same envelope in which it had been sent, he wrote across the address: "Return to the person, whose name and title I do not know."

Tossing all this into the receipt-book, in which the paper had been brought to him, he went out on the porch, and gave it back to the soldier. To the long chanter Pavliukhán who presented himself, he gave orders to grease the kibitka

wheels, and make ready to go with him, at the end of an hour, on a trip through the district, on business of the ecclesiastical superintendency; and sent his man for Akhílla.

In the meanwhile, Natálya Nikoláevna had risen; and making profuse excuses to her husband, for having fallen asleep the night before during his narrative, she began to prepare for him his customary little travelling trunk. But while thus engaged, she was surprised that, to her question, Where should she put the tobacco? the archpriest replied briefly, that he no longer smoked tobacco, and immediately turned to the deacon, who entered at that moment.

"I am setting out immediately on my superintendent's business, and I have requested you to come to me, in order to give you a warning," he began to address Akhílla, but the latter instantly interrupted him.

"I thank you most humbly, Father Archpriest, but I am already warned."

"Yes; but that is nothing, so far: I am not greatly alarmed at this, but I beg you—please be as steady as possible during my absence."

"Why now, Father Archpriest . . . even if you had not deigned to say anything, it is all over, anyway."

Tuberózoff halted, and bent upon him a steadfast, penetrating gaze. The deacon's face and figure did not appear to advantage; his thick, natural curls lay on his head like a wig which has got out of place; his right temple was bare too far back, his left was covered to his very eye.

The archpriest understood what it was that might have happened to his incautious deacon, and the latter, dropping his eyes into his hat, remarked:

"Again, last night, Father Archpriest, I had no sooner got home from Madame Biziúkhin's—for we all dropped in at her house, on our way from the Commissioner of Police—no sooner had I got home, than I said to my maid-servant: 'Yes, Espérance,' said I, 'Father Savély is right, let not the strong man trust in his strength, and let him not boast of his might.'"

The archpriest, instead of replying, stepped up to the deacon, and with his hand lifted the hair which so immoderately covered the whole left side of his face.

"No, Father Savély, there's nothing there, but here's where it is," said Akhilla softly, guiding the archpriest's hand round to the back of his head.

"It's shameful, deacon!" said Tuberózoff.

"And it is painful, to boot, Father Archpriest!" replied Akhilla, smiting himself on the breast, and beginning to weep bitterly, he lisped: "For this I shall torture myself every hour!"

Tuberózoff did not pour a single drop into this cup of Akhilla's suffering, but, on the contrary, lowered it by that which ran over the brim; he paced up and down the room, and touching the deacon on the arm, he said:

"Do you remember when, quite rightly, you reproached me with my pipe?"

"Forgive me."

"No; I am grateful to you for it, and although I see nothing particularly evil in that smoking, and had the habit of it, yet, in order to avoid disseminating gossip, I have today abandoned that habit, and have given away all my pipes to the gipsies."

"To the gipsies!" exclaimed the deacon, beaming all over.

"Yes; it makes no difference to you to whom I have given them, but do you give away your audacity to some one or other: you are not a boy, you are fifty years old, and you are not a kazák, for you wear a cassock. And now, good-bye once more, for I must go."

And Tuberózoff drove away, while the deacon betook himself to Father Zakháriya, with the object of entreating him to go at once, under some pretext or other, to the excise official's house, and find out to what calling Termoséssoff belonged.

"What is that to you?" replied Benefáktsoff.

"I must know his race and tribe, and from what father and mother he comes."

Zakháriya undertook to collect this information which was indispensable to Akhilla.

CHAPTER X

THINGS had been going very badly that morning in Biziúkhin's house: the wife of the Excise-man had bethought herself of a valuable diamond necklace which she had worn the night before, and had not found it. All the servants were astir; so were the master and mistress. They hunted for the lost article in the arbour, and all through the house, and did not find it anywhere.

Bornovolókoff began his inspection, and Termosésoff was frightfully busy: he kept fussing all the while about the coffer of the tarantass, which served as a receptacle for his movable property. Having drawn thence, from his collection of photographs several portraits of members of the Imperial Family, Termosésoff cleaned with rubber and a penknife those which seemed to him dusty, and then, placing them in an envelope, he began to write a letter to Petersburg to some friend of his who did not exist. Without knowing Termosésoff's plans, it is impossible to understand this. In the letter he described the beauties of nature, the pinkish-yellow hue of the clouds, and next his friendship with Bornovolókoff, and his brilliant hopes for a career in the service and an inheritance in the Government of Samára, and, at the end, he added a light sketch of society in Stáry Górod, as he had seen it on the preceding evening, criticizing it frightfully, and making only one exception, in favour of the postmaster's wife. "This woman," he wrote, "is entirely worthy of having one pause over her. Just fancy—there even seems to be a sort of fatality about it; the moment I caught sight of her, I instantly felt a sort of filial sentiment towards her. I will simply tell you, that I actually believe if she were to take a notion to whip me, I would kiss her hand in gratitude. However, I

myself do not yet know how it will end; she has two daughters. One of them is a genuine mother, and the other, assuredly, will be equally good. Who knows, my dear fellow, to what end inscrutable fate has brought me in contact with the family of this highly-respected woman? Perhaps I shall have occasion to sing: 'farewell farewell my freedom!' Don't condemn me, my dear fellow, but when you are on your way home, drive in this direction yourself for just a week! Who knows, my dear fellow, what will happen to you, what you will see? It is not a cheerful thing, you know, to live alone, and the more so now, when you and I are sure of our daily bread, and can help people, into the bargain! And now, farewell for the present. However, I shall certainly write to you again before long, because I have taken a fancy to make a literary sketch from the person of that esteemed wife of the postmaster, and I will send it to you to have it printed in the very best journal. Thy Termosésoff."

Having addressed this letter to Nikolái Ivánovitch Ivanóff, Termosésoff bent the sealed envelope between two fingers, and having convinced himself that in this manner his entire postscript concerning the postmaster's wife could be read, he cleared his throat, and said: "Now let us see whether Prepózensky spoke the truth last night when he declared that she unseals letters? If it is true, then I'll take proper precautions."

Thereupon, he took the letter and the photographs, and went to the postoffice. In addition to this letter, there lay in Termosésoff's pocket another composition which he had written at that same early hour when he had despatched the notification to Tuberózoff. In this epistle it was stated:

"The plot of the democratic socialists, who mask their purposes under the name of patriotism, is encountered everywhere, and here it is compounded of extremely varied elements. What is even more pernicious is, that the clergy are taking part in this plot to a significant degree,—the clergy, which is an element standing in very close relations to the people, and is accordingly, the most dangerous of all. The results

of the sad errors of liberal toleration are here limitless and innumerable. I will state one thing: Since certain newspapers have been permitted to interpret the significance which the Russian clergy had in Galicia, our numerous priests are also endeavouring to imitate the Galician clergy.

"They are no longer satisfied with performing the church ceremonies alone, but they are agitating for the freedom of the Church, and for Russian nationality.

"The archpriest of Stáry Górod, Savély Tuberózoff, who has more than once attracted to himself the attention of the authorities by his fierce and insolent character and pernicious mode of thought, has also been repeatedly restrained from his illegal deeds; but, nevertheless, he puts very little restraint upon himself, and, in reality, is full of all sorts of revolutionary principles.

"I do not wish to prophesy how pernicious he may be to the aims of the Government, but I assume that the injury he is capable of inflicting, and, in part, has already inflicted, is illimitably great. Archpriest Tuberózoff enjoys the respect of the entire city here, and it must be confessed that he, incontrovertibly, possesses brains and also an audacity, which, having been developed by the long-continued indulgence of the authorities, has reached the point of intrepidity. Such a man ought to be limited, in the strictest manner, in all his activities, but, in the meantime, he talks about everything without the slightest restraint, and, in addition, he enjoys the right of speaking to the public in church.

"This spiritual element, which stands so close to the people, on the other hand evidently is beginning to make approaches to all the landed forces, that is to say, to the nobles who own estates. Thus, for instance, this suspicious Archpriest Tuberózoff evidently enjoys the good will of Marshal of Nobility Tugánoff, whose personality and views are so well known to you. Mr. Tugánoff, who has been here at an evening party at the local Police Chief's, said that 'from the land the sun will be found,' evidently meaning, by the word 'land' the populace, and by 'sun' the monarch; but as to who is to

stand in its light, that is not at all difficult to determine, and, moreover, he himself has explained it, having said, in the course of conversation, that he was a man of the soil, while *'the Governor is the Caliph for an hour.'* And, in conclusion, in addition to all this, when a local schoolmaster here, Prepótensky, a perfectly stupid but thoroughly trustworthy man, said that none of us can answer, How and by what Russia is ruled? he replied, with impudent cynicism: 'I place great reliance,' he said 'in this case upon the words of Pánin of Katherine the Great's day, who remarked, that *Russia is ruled by the mercy of God and the stupidity of the populace.* I have the honour to call the attention of Your Excellency to all this, and herewith I consider it my duty to bear witness before Your Excellency to the invaluable services of my privately engaged office-clerk, Izmaíl Petróvitch Termosésoff, to whose fine observation and power of penetrating into all classes of society I am indebted for many precious items of information; and I venture to express the thought, that if the authorities should see fit to employ this gifted man in independent work in the line of observation, he might, indubitably, be of boundless service."

As Termosésoff walked along with this document, he bit his lips, and asked himself:

"Will that knave Bornovolókoff sign this thing? Well, never mind—I'll squeeze him well, and he'll sign everything!"

CHAPTER XI

FIRST of all, Termoséssoff went into the post office and there handed in his letter, and then he went directly to the postmaster's wife. They met like old friends; he kissed her hand, and she gave him a smack on the temple, and thanked him for the honour of his call.

"O dear me, it is I who must thank you," replied Termoséssoff. "It is so boresome here. I didn't even sleep all night with alarm, wondering where and with whom I was."

"Yes, she is such an inattentive person, that Dárya Nikoláevna,—that is to say, not inattentive, but no housekeeper."

"Yes, apparently that is true."

"Certainly it is! she is for ever poring over books, you know."

"You don't say so! what stupidity! One should keep one's eyes open, and not read. You know how I looked at and listened to all of you last night . . . 'twas simply terrible."

"Why, I said during the evening to my daughters: 'it must be very cheerful for our newly-arrived visitor.'"

"No; it does not matter about that. You see, I do not serve for money, but chiefly for the sake of getting acquainted with the country."

"Ah, in that case you will find an immense mass of material for observation among us!"

"*For observation*—precisely! And, by the way, here are those portraits which you gave me permission to bring. If you will allow me, I will hang them."

The postmaster's wife did not know how adequately to express her gratitude.

"It will be a task which I shall execute with great pleasure, while waiting to see your beautiful daughters. . . . I hope I am to see them?"

The postmaster's wife replied, that they were not yet dressed, because they were attending to the housekeeping, but that, nevertheless, they would present themselves.

"Ah, I entreat you, I entreat you to allow them," implored Termosésoff, and when his flattered hostess left the room, he began to dispose the portraits on the walls, hanging them on nails which he had brought in his pocket.

The toilet of the young ladies took about an hour, and during all that time, the postmaster's wife did not make her appearance.

"A good sign, a good sign!" thought Termosésoff. "She has certainly been reading my literary effort."

But now the young ladies, escorted by their mother, made their appearance. Izmaïl Petróvitch darted a swift and penetrating glance at the mother. She was beaming, and spattering around rays of rapture.

"She has nibbled at my worm, so she has!" winked Termosésoff to himself, and became tenfold more enchantingly gracious. But, in order to ascertain with greater certainty whether the postmaster's wife had "nibbled," he turned the conversation again on literature, and his travelling album of impressions and notes.

"Portraits! For heaven's sake, more portraits! more pictures from nature!" implored the postmistress.

"Yes, I have already written down how all the society here impresses me, and forgive me, but I have mentioned you and your daughters. . . . Just a little, you know, quite cursorily. . . . Now, if I might recall that letter which I have just despatched. . . ."

"Ah, no, why should you!" replied the postmistress, flushing up.

"She has nibbled, the bandit, she has swallowed the bait!" Termosésoff comforted himself, and insisted upon reading to the ladies what he had written about them. For a long time, the only sounds that could be heard in the drawing room were: "No, why read that? We can trust you without it!"

and "No, madam, why should I not read it? . . . For heaven's sake, do not trust me at my word!"

Termoséssoff's arguments acted too seductively on the curious young girls: first one, then the other began to endeavour to run to their father in the post-office and fetch the interesting letter of the passing guest.

Try as the postmistress would, by words and signs, to restrain them, they did not understand, and insisted upon going; but Termoséssoff understood the whole matter to perfection: the letter was in the hands of the hostess, and now all he had to do was to receive it from her hands, and simultaneously, to get her into his hands.

Termoséssoff, without an instant's hesitation, sprang up from his chair, and regardless of all her attempts to hold him back, and of all her calls, rushed obligingly to the office, shouting that, at last, he himself was incapable of denying himself the pleasure of presenting to the ladies the slight strokes of his profound raptures over them.

No entreaties could restrain his headlong flight, and the letter really was not in the post-office.

CHAPTER XII

IZMÁIL PETRÓVITCH returned to the ladies in great perturbation, and found them in still greater perturbation. At his entrance, both the young girls jumped up and ran away, in order to hide their tears, which had been caused by a maternal scolding, but the postmaster's wife herself remained as a victim.

Termoséssoff placed himself in front of her, and smiled.

"I see you," said the lady, mincingly, "and I am mortified."

"You have the letter?"

"What could I do? I could not resist: here it is."

"It is well that you do not despise it," Termoséssoff lauded her, as he took from her hand his unsealed letter.

"Yes, I am mortified, frightfully mortified. But what could I do . . . I am a woman. . . ."

"Enough of that, please! A woman! so much the better that you are a woman. A woman-friend is always better than a man-friend, and I am as confiding as a regular fool and stand in need of precisely such . . . feminine friendship! I have joined forces with Mr. Bornovolókoff. . . . We are friends of long standing, and precisely at the present time, he is more in the relation of a friend than a superior official to me, at any rate, so I think."

"Yes, I see, I see; you are very confiding and simple-minded."

"I am a fool, ma'am, in that respect! A perfect fool! Even the little children cheat me!"

"That is bad, that is frightfully bad!"

"Well, and what are you to do about it, if you are that way by nature? One person, who is acquainted with my friend-

ship and Bornovolóhoff's, says to me: "Really, Izmáil Petróvitch, you are altogether too confiding! Don't rely on that crafty friendship, my dear fellow, Bornovolóhoff says one thing to your face, and quite another behind your back about you, but still, I can't help myself, and I believe in him."

"Why?"

"O, come now! As the song says: 'I would like to hate you, but it is not in my power.' It is not in my power, ma'am, I cannot alter my opinion of a man on mere suspicion, but. . . if proofs were presented to me! . . . if I could find out what he says about me behind my back, or see his letters! . . . O, then I would never, all my life long, forget the services of such a friendship."

The postmaster's wife expressed her regret that she had never even beheld that sly Bornovolóhoff, and inquired whether Termosésóff had a photograph of that traitor.

"No, I have no photograph; but I have a letter. Here, this is his handwriting."

And he showed her, and left behind him, on the table, a fragment of a sheet written by the hand of Bornovolóhoff.

CHAPTER XIII

THIS second bait was cast even more accurately than the first, and towards evening, while Termosésoff was sitting over his coffee with Bornovolókoff and Madame Biziúkhin, a postman made his appearance, with the request that Izmáil Petróvitch would come immediately to the wife of the postmaster.

"Ah, yes, I promised her to go out of town with her to-day, to some grove or other, and I came near forgetting all about it!" replied Termosésoff, and went away, in the wake of the postman.

The postmistress met him alone in the drawing-room, and pressing his hand, whispered:

"Wait for me! I will return at once—"and thereupon, she left the room. When the lady returned a minute later, Termosésoff was standing at the window, and tapping himself on the back with his cap. The postmistress glanced about her; fastened the door, and silently drawing a letter from her pocket, handed it to Termosésoff.

Termosésoff took the envelope, but did not open it: he was playing the part of a simpleton, and appeared to be awaiting an explanation as to what he was expected to do with that letter.

"Read it boldly, have no fear, no one will come in here," the hostess said to him.

Termosésoff read the letter, in which Bornovolókoff complained to his Petersburg cousin Nina about his misfortune, —how in Moscow he had accidentally encountered Termosésoff, whom he proceeded to designate as 'a terrible good-for-nothing and villain,' and implored his cousin Nina to 'exert all the efforts and all the influence in her power, to obtain

for that scoundrel a good post in Poland, or in Petersburg, because otherwise, as the man knew all his *old stupidities*, he might make the devil knows what sort of a mass, as he was quite capable of astounding the world with his rascality, and was, moreover, probably a thief as things always began to disappear wherever he stopped.'

Termosésoff read this letter of his friend and superior, very calmly without twitching a single muscle, and having finished his perusal, silently returned it to the postmaster's wife.

"Do you recognize your friend?"

"I had not expected this! May God strike me dead if I expected it!" replied Termosésoff, sighing and shaking his head.

"I must confess," remarked the postmistress, turning from corner to corner the letter which had been given back to her,—"that I was fairly amazed. . . . My maid said to me: 'Mistress, mistress, some strange gentleman has just dropped a letter in the box!' I said: 'Well, and what of that?' but I thought to myself, all the same,—'why did he put the letter in the box? That is not the custom with us: here people put the letter into our hands. An honest man would not try to conceal the fact that he is sending off a letter, but this is certainly some sort of rascality!' And you will hardly believe how and why? . . . I said, simply from some sort of premonition: 'Yes, I feel that something is surely menacing that young man, whom I . . . have come to love like a son.'"

Termosésoff gave the postmistress his hand, and kissed her hand.

"It is true," went on the postmistress, with unfeigned, nervous tears in her eyes. "It is true. . . . I say, well, here he is alone. . . . I love him like a son; I am making no mistake in this, and thank God that I have read it."

"Take it," she continued, holding out the letter to Termosésoff: "take it, and destroy it."

"Destroy it—why? No, I will not destroy it. No; let it go whither it is sent, but if you permit, I will merely make a copy of it for myself."

Termosésóff had instantly taken into consideration that, although the letter was not flattering to his honour, it was, nevertheless extremely advantageous to him in this respect, that, in the quality of a dangerous man, he would infallibly be provided with a good place.

But, having made a copy for himself, Termosésóff put both it and the original in his pocket, and set out for a stroll.

He walked about until late in the evening in the suburban fields, and returned when the Biziúkhin pair had retired to their bedchamber, while Bornovolókoff was sitting alone, and engaged in writing something.

"Are you scribbling, Your Transparency? Are you scribbling again?" Termosésóff addressed him cheerfully.

In reply he received only a curt, dispassionate "yes."

"Probably you are again concocting some sort of ribaldry?"

Bornovolókoff shuddered.

"Well, that's exactly it!" uttered Termosésóff lazily, and having suddenly, and unexpectedly locked the door, he put the key in his pocket.

Bornovolókoff sprang to his feet, and hastily began to tear up the paper he had written.

CHAPTER XIV

THE hard-necked sharper burst out laughing.

"Ah, how startled you are!" said he. "I locked the door simply that you and I might be the more free to exchange soul-confidences, and you have torn up your whole composition."

Bornovolókoff sat down.

"Here, sign this paper, only beware of tearing it up."

Termosésoff laid before him that informal paper, in which truth and untruth concerning Tuberózoff and Tugánoff were set down, and appended his attestation.

Bornovolókoff apathetically perused the whole of it, from beginning to end.

"Well," inquired Termosésoff, perceiving that the reading was finished: "Will you sign it or not?"

"I might say to you that I am surprised, but . . ."

"But I have already broken you of the habit of being surprised at me! I know that very well indeed, and I am not surprised at you, either!" and Termosésoff placed before Bornovolókoff the copy from his letter to his cousin Nina, and added:

"I have the original, sir."

"You have?—but how have you dared?"

"Well, you and I are not going to begin to discuss daring! I hold this document by the right of the strong man and the clever man."

"Did you steal it?"

"Yes, I did."

"But the devil alone knows what to make of this!"

"Yes, but there's one thing the devil does not know: How to be a friend and comrade; to make ready to annihilate Rus-

sia, and then, all of a sudden, to certify that I am about the worst rascal going, and a good-for-nothing! No, my dear fellow, that is not nice, and in return you are going to sign quite a different sort of recommendation for me."

Bornovolókoff sprang up and began to pace the floor.

"Sit down," Termoséssoff invited him, "that won't help you a bit! This matter must be settled on amicable terms; otherwise, do you know where I can hide you away now with this little letter of yours, which contains indications that your skirts have not been clean in the past? Neither your little Polish women nor your cousin Nina can rescue you from that place."

Bornovolókoff impatiently slapped his hips, and exclaimed:

"How could you steal my letter, when I put it in the post box with my own hands?"

"Well, you can spend your Saturdays guessing at how I stole it. That's my business, and I now say to you, for the last time: Sign! On the first page, write your official status, rank, name and surname, and on the copy of your letter, write a countersignature, and a couple of words besides, which I will dictate to you."

"You . . . you will dictate to me?"

"Yes, yes, I will dictate to you and you will write them and you will give me a thousand rubles of arrears."

"Arrears! . . . for what?"

"For your peace without me."

"I have not a thousand rubles."

"I will trust you on your signature. One hundred, one hundred and fifty rubles in cash, and I will wait for the rest . . . Only, see here; there's one thing about it—I'm not going to talk very long—voulez-vous, then voulez-vous, and ne voulez-vous, if you like, I have the honour to make my farewell, and take my departure."

Bornovolókoff paced the room.

"Reflect, reflect! it isn't proper to do such a deed without reflection, only all the same, you'll not think out anything. I conduct my affairs accurately," said Termoséssoff.

"Give it here, and I'll sign it," said Bornovolókoff sharply.

"All right, sir!"

Termoséssoff wiped off the pen on the skirt of his coat, dipped it in the ink, and respectfully handed it to Bornovolókoff, together with the copy from his letter to his Petersburg cousin Nina.

"What am I to write?"

"I'll tell you directly, sir."

Termoséssoff cleared his throat, and began:

"Be so good as to write: 'The scoundrel Termoséssoff.' "

Bornovolókoff paused and gazed at him with staring eyes.

"Do you actually wish me to write those words?"

"Absolutely, sir; write: 'The scoundrel Termoséssoff' "

"And that is not even insulting to you?"

"Everything in the world, you know, is either insulting or not insulting, according to the person from whom it proceeds."

"Yes; but tell me, as quickly as possible, what more you want; I have written 'The scoundrel Termoséssoff.' "

"I thank you humbly, sir. Continue."

CHAPTER XV

THE secretary, standing behind Bornovolókoff's chair, gazed across his shoulder at the paper and went on dictating: "The scoundrel Termosésoff, by some unfathomable and ingenious means, has got possession of my autograph letter to you in which I, thanks to my lack of caution, wrote the same thing which you read above on this page, although it is now written by the hand of that same good-for-nothing Termosésoff."

"Is that enough?"

"No, sir, you must add something more. Be so good as to write: 'How he got hold of my letter, which I deposited in the post-office with my own hands, I cannot guess, but, on the other hand, that very deed may serve you as a proof of the audacity and enterprise of that villain, who has set himself the task of sticking by me, and torturing me, until you get him appointed to a place with a good salary. I adjure you, by our mutual happiness, to do for him even the impossible, for otherwise he swears that he will disclose all we did in the foolish period of our revolutionary sympathies.'"

"Cannot the last words be changed by editing?"

"No, sir; I am like Pilate: 'What I have written, I have written.'"

Bornovolókoff finished writing his humiliation, and flung the sheet from him.

"Now just sign this paper about the clergy, and the pernicious movements in society."

Bornovolókoff took the pen in his hand, and began once more to inspect that document, meditated, and inquired:

"What have these people, Tuberózoff and Tugánoff done to you?"

"Absolutely nothing."

"Perhaps they are very fine men . . ."

"That is very possible."

"Well, then, why are you calumniating them? For it is calumny, you know."

"Not all of it, but there is a bit of calumny about it!"

"But what is it for?"

"It can't be helped: I must show my capacities. For you blue-blooded folks, your uncles and aunts bestir themselves, but we parvenus have to look out for ourselves."

Bornovolókoff sighed, and with loathing signed the paper upon which Termosésoff had builded his shame, Savely's ruin, and his own success.

Termosésoff took the signed slander, and folding the paper, remarked:

"Well, and now let's attend to a third matter, and then we'll put on our hats and take leave of each other. I have prepared a note of hand for eight hundred rubles, and I request two hundred in cash down."

Bornovolókoff made no reply, and stared at Termosésoff, with his elbows propped on the table.

"Well, are we going to play at being dumb?"

"No, I am only looking at you and admiring you."

"Admire me, such as life has made me, sign that note, and hand over the money."

"For what, Mr. Termosésoff? For what?"

"Why do you ask 'for what?' For your former secret pleasures in the quiet of the night, in Holy Moscow, in sinful Petersburg; for the conferences, the plans, the lists, for all the amusements, of which I have kept track both in my pocket and in my memory, so that I can ruin your whole career."

Bornovolókoff signed the note, and threw down the money.

"Thank you, sir," Termosésoff bowed his thanks as he thrust the note and the money into his pocket: "I am very glad that you did not haggle."

"What would have happened if I had haggled?"

"I would have demanded double from you."

Termoséssoff, having collected all his extortions, began to look about for his cap.

"I shall sleep in the tarantás," he said: "we two would find it rather stifling here together."

"Yes, that is excellent, but I hope that now you are going to return my own letter to me."

"Hm! Well, no, you need hope for nothing of the sort: that wasn't in the bargain."

"But of what use is it to you?"

"That wasn't in the bargain!"

And Termoséssoff burst out laughing.

"I'll give you more money, if you like."

"No, sir, I'm not greedy, sir, I have enough."

"Whew, you are a . . ."

"Beast, did you mean to say? All right, don't mind me, don't stand on ceremony. I'm not listening and I'm going to bye-bye."

"Then harken to me, at least: Where are the brilliants which Madame Biziúkhin has lost?"

"How should I know?"

"You . . . you were with her, somewhere or other . . . in the harbour, wasn't it?"

"What if I was? Others were there also: that nasty little schoolmaster, and the deacon."

"Yes; well, then tell me, at any rate, are those diamonds concealed anywhere among my things?"

"How can I know about that?"

"O Lord! that man will drive me mad!" exclaimed Borno-volókkoff, beginning to fidget uneasily.

"Now see here, you," whispered Termoséssoff, squeezing his hand: "don't you take it into your head to write about this to your cousin, for if you do . . . I'm not the only one who has read these letters here."

CHAPTER XVI

THE loss of Madame Biziúkhin's diamonds, the lampopó, the rout of Akhílla and Prepótensky, the pranks with Dárya Nikoláevna and the postmaster's wife and, in conclusion, the checkmate administered to Bornovolókoff,—all this, being the work of about four-and-twenty hours, had somewhat dazed even Termosésóff himself. He felt an unconquerable need to get a good sleep, and stretching himself out on the hay in the tarantás, he slept a sound and mighty sleep until late in the morning. The cool carriage-shed, in which stood the equipage converted by Termosésóff into a bedroom, remained closed, and Izmáíl Petróvitch, even when he did awake, lay a good while longer, stretched himself, scratched his heels, and meditated.

In his meditations, this fruit of our nursery-garden was particularly interesting from this point of view, that he never, for one minute, reverted to what was past and done, and did not pause over a single one of the new persons whom he had tricked so harshly and boldly by the most unceremonious methods. Although this may appear strange, yet we may be permitted to state, that there was in Termosésóff his own sort of good-nature, mixed up with the unbounded moral slovenliness of the impudent man, and with scorn for all men and for all opinions. Apparently, he had decided, once for all, that conscience, honour, love, respect, and, in general, all the so-called elevated sentiments,—are all nonsense, fiddle-faddle, trash, invented by the philosophers, literary men and other crazy visionaries. He did not deny—no, that would be too contestable a point—he simply knew that nothing of the sort existed, and therefore it is not worth while to pause over it. No less strange was his bearing towards people: he did not

think that the individual who stood before him at any given moment had existed before he had met him, and wished to live afterwards, and that consequently, that individual had his own historical views backward, and his prospects for the future. No, according to him, every man leaped out before him like a fungus in rain, or a mushroom, just for that moment only, when Termosésoff beheld him, and so he immediately dealt with him, and exploited him in the most audacious and unceremonious manner, and then, as soon as he had served his turn, he instantly and simply forgot all about him. In his cynical language, he ingenuously remarked: "I'm never angry afterwards at a man whom I have insulted," and that was true. If Akhílla or Prepótensky had come to him in the shed then, he could have talked with them without being in the slightest degree abashed by what had taken place the night before.

Having caught Bornovolókoff, whom he had long since entirely forgotten, he seized hold on him, and said: 'I'll hang on him!' And hang he did. On encountering Madame Biziúkhin, he wanted to pay court to her, and he did it; interesting himself in her development, the devil knows why, he cast a thought upon the possibility of appropriating to himself the diamonds she was wearing, immediately put the idea into execution, and, had hidden them so craftily, into the bargain, that had the Biziúkhins had him searched—which God forbid!—the diamonds would, of course, have turned out to be not in the possession of Termosésoff, but in that of Prince Bornovolókoff, who was wearing those jewels almost on his very person: they were sewn into his cloak. Of course, Termosésoff, did not even meditate at all about Archpriest Tuberózoff, and at Madame Biziúkhin's very first complaint against the archpriest, he had cast upon the winds a vow to wipe out that old man, but had afterwards been inspired by the idea of placing him as a step for the recommendation of his "capacities for observation," and now no power on earth would have turned him aside from his stubborn efforts to put this plan into execution.

Had the old archpriest known this, such a rôle would have

been the very greatest affront to him, but, of course, he never even stumbled upon the idea of what was being prepared for him, and he drove away behind his brown horses, from village to village, from church to church, traversed many versts through the forests, rested in the meadows and on the edges of the grain-fields, and strengthened himself in spirit in the lap of Nature.

But during this time, a long noose had been made ready, thanks to the untiring efforts of Termosésóff. The complaint of citizen Danílka had received a start, an insignificant incident had become an affair which required a decision in accordance with the laws.

Akhílla was horrified. He rushed hither and thither, asking every one:

“Ah, my dear brethren where are they going to condemn me to now, on account of Danílka?”

A court-room was more dreadful to him than anything else in the world.

Rumours concerning the approaching trial made their way from the town into the adjacent country, and reached Tuber-ózóff—who, at first, did not believe them,—with the most absurd exaggerations; but later on, on receiving confirmation of the fact in all quarters, he became alarmed, and having made the round of his entire ecclesiastical district, he ordered Pavliukhán to return to town.

CHAPTER XVII

THE noisy reports of the attacks upon Akhílla, and of the entanglement of the archpriest in that insignificant affair, reached Father Savély in a distant parish, from which at least two days of travelling were required to reach the town.

The days were intolerably hot. From the last village where Tuberózoff passed the night, to the town, about fifty versts remained to be traversed. The archpriest, who had not set out early, had succeeded in covering barely half the distance, when the heat became unbearable; his poor, little brown horses became covered with soapy lather, sweated profusely, and were pitiful to behold. Tuberózoff decided to halt to feed them, and for his last rest: he did not care to enter any posting-house yard, but calling to mind a very good place on the verge of the forest, on the so-called "Korólkoff's Hill," he decided to halt there, in the cool shade.

From this spot there opens out a spacious, smooth slope, at the end of which, almost twenty versts away, glimmer the golden domes of the town churches, and behind is the age-old wood, in which there is no break clear to the dense primeval forest tract. Here profound silence and coolness reigned.

Exhausted with the sultry heat, Tuberózoff had barely alighted from his kibitka, when instantly he felt infinitely relieved. In spite of the universal heat and weariness, a vivifying coolness reigned in the thick, dark-blue young oak coppice. There was not a speck of dirt on the elastic leaves of the young oaks, which looked as though they had been dipped in green wax. Everywhere was vivid, soft, soothing lustrelessness. From beneath the checkered, stencilled

fronds of the bracken, peeped forth the bright-scarlet berries of true-love; higher up, all gilded with the light, gleamed the dry hazel-bushes, and in the distance, on the dark-brown peaty soil, were scattered whole families of mushrooms, and the coral of the brambles.

While Pavliukhán, clad only in his under-linen and waist-coat, unharnessed the sweating horses, walked them up and down, and set them to their fodder, in the coarse cloth sack fastened to the shaft, the archpriest strolled a while in the forest, and then, taking a small rug from the carriage, he carried it to a green dale, from which, turbulently bubbling up flowed a noisy brook, washed himself there with the cool water, and then lay down to rest upon his rug.

The measured murmur of the brook, and the coolness wafted a healthy "Russian spirit" upon the head of Tuberózoff, scorched with the heat, and he fell asleep without noticing it, and against his will: he did not wish to sleep,—he tried to rise, and slumber overcame and held him fast,—he tried to say something to Pavliukhán, but sleep closed his mouth with her soft hand.

The archpriest's slumberous meditations were so strong, that Pavliukhán in vain shook him by the shoulder, inviting him to rise, and eat the porridge of groats and young mushrooms. Tuberózoff half awoke, and murmuring: "Eat, my friend, sleep is sweet to me," again fell asleep more profoundly than before.

Pavliukhán dined alone. He collected the spoons and the bread in a plaited travelling-sack of linden-bast, turned the kettle upside down on the fresh grass, and having flooded the small camp-fire with water, he crawled under the cart, and immediately followed the example of the archpriest. Neither did Father Savély's horses work their jaws very long: they, also, one after the other, speedily quieted down, drooped their heads, and dozed.

The kingdom of dreams reigned all around. The silence was so unbroken that a hare who was shedding his fur leaped out from the forest to this border of the wood; and after a

jump, squatted down on his haunches, twitched his whiskers, but immediately became alarmed, and tossing his long ears on his back, disappeared.

Tuberózoff was torn from his slumbers by his mouth, with excessive difficulty, uttering in reply to some one, the word: "Good-day."

"With whom am I exchanging greetings? Who has been here with me?" he tried to understand, as he awoke. And it seemed to him, that a moment before there had been standing by his side some cool and quiet person, in a long garment the colour of a ripening plum. . . . It seemed so vivid, that Savély hastily raised himself on his elbow; but all he saw was Pavliukhán sleeping yonder, his brown horses, and his kibitka. Everything was simple and clear. Yonder even was the side-horse, who wearied of his rest, was shaking off the bridle from his head. . . . He got it off, rolled on the ground, rose and sniffed the breeze. Tuberózoff continued to doze, the horse wandered further and further afield; now it nipped at the thick grass of the forest-edge; now it devoured the crest of a young oak; now, at last, it stepped upon a boundary-strip, overgrown with wild clover, and again sniffed the warm breeze. Savély continued to gaze, and could in nowise comprehend his situation. He rubbed his eyes, and glanced upward: high above his head soared a raven. Was it a raven or a hawk? No, reflected the old man, it certainly is a raven: it holds itself more steadily, and its circles are wider than a hawk's. . . . And now there floats thence, like a handful of peas flung forth, *ku-u-rliu*. That is a raven's *ku-u-rliu*. What is he watching thence? What does he want? He is weary of floating in the sky, and perhaps he wants some of that water. And to Tuberózoff's memory recurs the legend, directly connected with this spring, which, according to tradition, has a special and miraculous origin. The pure, transparent basin of the spring resembles a crystal cup excavated in the earth. The formation of this basin is attributed to a bolt of lightning. It fell from heaven, and here penetrated the bosom of the earth, and, moreover, under

thoroughly peculiar circumstances. It was said that in days gone by—very long ago, of course,—a Russian hero fell exhausted in battle, and the countless horde of unbelievers surrounded him, who was alone, on all sides. Death was unavoidable; and the warrior prayed to Christ, that the Saviour would rescue him from shameful captivity, and tradition affirms that at that self-same moment, from out of a clear sky, a bolt of lightning flashed down, and mounted again on high, and there came a clap of thunder, and the Tatár horses fell on their knees, and flung off their riders, and when these raised themselves up and stood on their feet, there was no warrior, but on the spot where he had been standing, thundering and flashing with diamond foam, welled up in a lofty stream a fountain of ice-cold water, which tore angrily at the banks of the ravine, and flowed far away across the green meadow in a silvery brook.

Every one regarded the spring as miraculous, and superstition declares, that in its water is hidden wonder-working power, which even the birds and beasts are said to know. This is known, to every one; everybody knows it, because here exists the perpetual presence of the Mussulman faith. Here faith works wonders, and hence everything here, from the crest of the centenarian oak-tree, to the mushroom which nestles beside its root, is so strong and powerful. Even that which is completely dead grows alive here, apparently: yonder is a slender, dry clump of hazel-bushes: they have been seared by the lightning, but their bark, higher up than the root, is twined with bind-weed, and thence a new life will spring. And it is said that it is terrible here in a thunder-storm.

“Well, every one knows that there are such electrified places,” said Tuberózoff to himself, and he felt as though his grey hair were moving on his head. No sooner had he risen to his feet, than he beheld, a few paces in front of him, a small, flesh-coloured cloud, which was floating over the boundary-strip, slightly altering its outlines the while, in the direction whither his free horse had strayed. The little cloud appeared to be following straight after the horse, and on reaching it,

it suddenly began to move up and down, curled upwards, and dispersed, like the smoke from the mouth of a cannon. The horse neighed wildly, and started off in terror, hardly touching the earth with its hoofs.

This was a bad thing. Tuberózoff hastily sprang forward, awakened Pavliukhán, helped him to scramble on the back of the other horse, and sent him in pursuit of the frightened animal, which, in the meantime, had vanished without leaving a trace.

"Make haste, overtake him," said Savély to the chanter, and pulling out his silver watch, he glanced at it. It was a little after three o'clock.

The old man sat down in the shade with head uncovered, yawned and suddenly started. Far away in the distance he heard the heavy rumble of thunder.

"What can that be? Can it be thunder?"

Thereupon he rose to his feet, and walking away from the forest-border, he saw that a dark thunder-cloud really was coming up from the east. The storm overtook Savély entirely alone amid the forest and the fields, which were prepared to meet its intolerable breath.

Another clap of thunder, and the grain-fields waved more violently, and a stream of fresh, cool air drifted across them.

Small clouds rose in clumps to join the great black cloud which screened the whole eastern sky. Something seemed to be drawing them up and disposing them like side-scenes, and every now and then a flash of fire cut through the whole. Just as a magician, who is ready to give a terrible performance, inspects the dark stage for the last time, lantern in hand, before all the lights are ignited, and the curtain rises. The dark cloud crawls onward, and the nearer it comes, the more impenetrable does it seem. Will God carry it past? Will it not burst somewhere far away? But no: yonder, at its upper edge, a fiery thread has flashed forth, and the lightning has begun to blink, and dart out of the dark mass from all points simultaneously. There is no longer any sun: the clouds have covered its disk, and its long rays, like swords,

after flashing forth for a moment, have glimmered and vanished. The whirlwind began to whistle and rattle. The clouds began to flutter like flags. Broad white spots began to mottle the brown field of ripening rye, and soon flickered with continual motion: in one place, one seems to fall straight from the sky, in another, a second spreads out widely, and all at once, the two move to meet each other, merge together, and both disappear. At the boundary-strip, along the road, the wind shook the ears of grain so strangely, that it seemed as though it were not the wind, but that some living person had hidden himself at the roots, and was wrathful. A roar ran through the forest. Now came a zigzag of lightning above the forest; and now another has flourished right along the crests of the trees, and suddenly it has become still . . . everything has quieted down! . . . there is neither lightning nor wind: everything is quiet. This is the calm before the storm: everything which has delayed to hide itself from the tempest takes advantage of this last moment of stillness; a few bees were borne past Tuberózzoff, not as though they were flying, but as though driven onward by the pressure of the wind. Out of the dark coppice of bushes, which now seemed perfectly black, several thoroughly frightened hares leaped forth and laid themselves down, flat on the earth, on the grassy boundary-strip. Along the grass, which in this illumination was also as black as asphalt, rolled a silvery ball, and darted underground. It was a hedgehog. Everything stowed itself away wherever it could. Here was the last; the raven which had so recently been soaring, pressed its wings tight against its shoulders, and hurtling itself downward, plunged heavily into the crest of a lofty oak.

CHAPTER XVIII

TUBERÓZOFF was no coward, but he was a nervous man, and such people are seized upon, during heavy electrical discharges, by an involuntary and unconquerable uneasiness. This uneasiness he experienced on this occasion, and looking about him, he considered where, in what spot, he might meet the impending storm, and await its conclusion.

His first movement was to rush to his carriage, seat himself in it, and cover himself up, but no sooner had he ensconced himself there, than the wood began to creak, and the kibitka rocked like a linden-wood cradle. It was clear that this refuge was not reliable: the kibitka might, very easily, be overturned, and crush him.

Tuberózzoff sprang out of his equipage, and started at a run for the field of rye. The wind, which was swirling on his front and sides, stopped him, tore him backward by the tails of his coat, and whistled, and trumpeted, and squealed, and howled in his ears.

Tuberózzoff flew to the little dell where the spring was; and in the crystal reservoir of the spring, things were still more disturbed: the water was roaring and boiling, and beneath the spreading circles which covered it, some one confined in the bowels of the earth seemed to be struggling to get out. And suddenly, in the dark-leadened mass of water, a bloody flame flashed and spread. This was a bolt of lightning, but what a strange bolt! It fell in a dart of two zig-zags downward from above, and reflected in the water at the same moment, in the same zigzag; it writhed up to the sky. It was exactly as though the sky and the earth were exchanging flames with each other; a crashing clap of thunder roared out, as from a mass of iron bars hurled from a roof, and a

cloud of spray rose upward from the spring in a perfect fountain.

Tuberózoff covered his face with his hands, fell on one knee, and committed his soul and his life to God; and over the fields and the forest passed one of those thunder-cannonades, which remind a man, more eloquently than anything else, of his defenceless insignificance in the face of Nature's power. The lightning flashed; one peal of thunder followed another with a crash, and suddenly Tuberózoff saw before him the dark bole of an oak, and floating toward it a globe of flame, which gleamed like a dull lamp; the wonderful gleam in the midst of the wood shone with a dazzling light, grew into a ball, and burst. Through the air rattled a frightful, *bbbakh!* The old man's breath grew short, and burning-hot rings encircled all his fingers and toes, his body stretched painfully, collapsed, and fell. . . . He was conscious of only one thing—that *everything had crumbled away*. The end has come! darted through the archpriest's mind, and no other word. The archpriest did not take note of the time which elapsed from the moment when he was thus stunned, and whether he had lain long unconscious. On coming to himself, he heard a heavy, leisurely rumbling far away in the sky, and then that died away. The thunderstorm was over. Savély raised his head, looked about him, and descried on the ground, not more than a couple of paces from him, something huge and formless. It was a whole heap of branches, the entire crest of a mighty oak. The tree had been lopped off as though with a knife, at the very root, and from beneath its boughs, which were mingled with ears of rye, a repulsive, piercing shriek resounded: it was the raven of a short time before, screaming at the full power of his throat. He had fallen, in company with the tree, was crushed to the ground by a heavy bough, and opening wide his purple throat, he was struggling convulsively and shrieking desperately.

Tuberózoff sprang away from this sight with as alert a leap as though he had been seventeen, not seventy years of age.

CHAPTER XIX

THE thunderstorm passed over as rapidly as it had gathered. In place of the black cloud a pink streak outlined itself against the blue clearing, and on the wet bag filled with oats, which lay on the box of the kibitka, the sparrows were already cheerily chirping, and boldly dragging the damp grain through the holes of the open-meshed material. The forest was full of life: a soft, enticing whistle became audible, and on the grassy boundary-strip, a pair of steppe-doves alighted, loudly flapping their wings. The female dove spread out her little wing on the ground, scratched on it with her little reddish claw, and erecting it like a sail, hid herself from her mate. The male dove swelled up his crop, made a reverence to the very earth, and said sadly to her: "I shall die." These reverences wind up with kisses, and their wings hurriedly flutter in the thick fringe of fine wormwood. Life has begun. Not far away, a trampling of hoofs became audible: it was Pavliukhán. He was riding one horse, and leading the other by the reins.

"Well, Father, you are alive!" he shouted gaily, as he dismounted, and hastened to the kibitka. "I tried to make great haste, you know, so that you might not be caught alone in the storm, but when that big peal fairly crashed, I fell off the horse, you know, and banged my whole face against the ground. . . . And did it cut down this oak?"

"Yes, my friend, it did. Let us harness up and depart."

"My God, what a tremendous force, you know!"

"Yes, my friend, let us go."

"There's a light breeze now, you know, and it will be splendid travelling.

"Splendid, harness up as quickly as you can, splendid!"

And Tuberózoff impatiently took hold and helped Pavliukhán.

The horses, well bathed with the rain, were harnessed in a minute, and the archpriest's kibitka rolled off, the wheels splashing in the puddles of the country road, which was worn into ruts.

The air was agreeable in the highest degree; the light was warm; a thin steam rose from the fields; there was an odour of hazel bushes in the air. Tuberózoff, as he sat in his kibitka, felt more at ease than he had felt for a long, long time. He kept inhaling deep breaths, and rejoicing that he could breathe so deeply. It was as though an eagle had acquired new wings!

At the town barrier, he was greeted by a brisk peal of the bells; it was the church bells ringing for the Vigil service.

CHAPTER XX

TUBERÓZOFF'S kbitka drove into his own yard.

"O Lord, how I have suffered on your account, Father Savély!" cried Natálya Nikoláevna, rushing to greet her husband. "Such a thunderstorm, and you, my heart, were alone."

"O, my darling, yes, I was only one step from death!"

And the archpriest narrated to his wife everything that had befallen him at the Thundering Spring, and added, that henceforth he was living, as it were, a second life, not his own, but some one else's, and therein he beheld a lesson for himself, and also a reproof, for having never really thought about the instability and insignificance of his brief span of life.

Natálya Nikoláevna merely blinked her eyes, and sighing, remarked: "And now, don't you want something to eat?" but perceiving that her husband in reply to this shook his head, she inquired about his thirst.

"Thirst?" repeated Savély, after his wife: "Yes, I am thirsty."

"Will you have some tea?"

The archpriest smiled, and kissing his wife on the crown of the head, said:

"No, I thirst for truth."

"Well, what of that? And blessed be thy God, that, whatsoever thou undertakest, all is well."

"Well, now I will wash, and do you, my dear, relate to me what they have been doing here with the deacon." And the archpriest went to the shining copper washbasin, and began to wash, while Natálya Nikoláevna communicated to him what she knew concerning Akhilla, and drew the deduction, that it was all done out of spite toward her husband.

The archpriest maintained silence, and having finished his toilet, he took his stick and his hat, and betook himself to the church, where, at that hour, the Vigil Service was in progress.

Five minutes later, as he stood at one side of the altar in the sanctuary, he laid on the sloping board of the window illuminated by the setting sun, a sheet of paper, and wrote upon it. What did he write? We can read it under his hand.

Here is the manuscript addressed by Savély to the Commissioner of Police Porókhontzeff: "As I have to celebrate tomorrow a Cathedral Liturgy, on the occasion of the feast-day, I consider it my duty to notify your High Born of this, and most respectfully to request that you will inform all the officials of the town thereof today, in good season, taking the proper receipts, in order that they may be present in the temple. And I particularly request that you will recommend it to those of the persons in the service who are most inclined to neglect their duty, as I have decided promptly to report to the authorities the bad example which they set. I most respectfully request that Your High Born will give a receipt for this notification."

The archpriest asked for the church message-book, and having numbered the paper, he entered it in the book with his own hand, and immediately despatched it to its destination by the sexton.

CHAPTER XXI

THE night which followed this evening, in Savély's house, reminded one of that on which we beheld the old man with his journal. Again he was alone in his little drawing-room, again he paced the floor, again he seated himself, wrote and meditated, but he did not have his book before him. On the table, to which he stepped up, lay a small sheet of paper folded once, and on this sheet of paper, he strung, like pearl beads, close and clear, the following fragmentary remarks: "Give the King Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the King's son."

"A daily reminder from my position of yesterday during the storm. The raven: how he hid himself from the storm, in the most stalwart oak, and found death where he had expected protection.

"How instructive to me is that raven. Is safety where we expect it—is ruin where we fear it?

"Boundless is our reasoning, which enslaves our understanding. Learning which rejects the possibility of attaining what has hitherto been attainable.

"The insufficiency and inaccuracy of information concerning the soul, lack of understanding of man's nature, and the apathetic indifference towards good and evil, and the unfair judgment which flow therefrom: the defence of what cannot be justified, and the censure of what was not worthy. Moses, who was a Hebrew, when he slew the Egyptian, subjected to condemnation, from the false point of view of certain liberals, who condemned the heat of his patriotic feeling? Does not Judas the Betrayer deserve a reward from the point of view of 'those who rely blindly upon the law,' since he 'kept the law' when he betrayed the teacher who was persecuted by the

rulers? (Innokenty of Khersón, and his interpretation.) Our days also are evil: the reproaches of those who are not impartial towards the guile of the secret enemies of the empire. The great loss of anxiety as to the welfare of our native land and, as final example, the neglect of prayer on the day of national festivals, reduced to pure formality.

“Interpretation of the words: ‘Give the King Thy judgments, O God,’ in the thought: ‘that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life’ (The Apostle Paul). How important is such a life? Example: Rehoboam, after the death of Solomon, surrounded by his friends and the young men who had grown up with him, and stood before him, and craftily represented to him that the lightening of the people’s yoke was a lowering of his kingly dignity, and how he, in accordance with their advice, added to the woes of Israel. ‘My father did lade you with a heavy yoke; but I will add to your yoke.’ (I Kings xii, 11). The miseries which resulted from this, and the partition of the kingdom.

“From this it is clear, that we ought to desire and to pray that the heart of the King may be not in the hands of men, but in the hands of God.

“But we criminally neglect this care, and I am even surprised, and wonder what explanation there can be, if on such a day I chance to see that the church is not empty. I run through all the list of conjectures, and I see that there is no possible explanation for it, except the fear of my threats, and hence I conclude that all these worshippers are crafty and lazy servants, and that their prayer is not a prayer but rather a commercial transaction, a traffic in the temple, beholding which our Lord Jesus Christ not only was troubled in His divine spirit, but taking a scourge of small cords, He drove them out of the temple.

“Following His Divine example, I reprimand and condemn this traffic in conscience, which I see before me in the temple. This mercenary prayer is repulsive to the church. Perhaps I ought to take a scourge of cords and drive forth those who today traffic in this temple, that the faithful heart may not

be tempted by their guile. But let my word take the place for them of the scourge. Rather let the temple be empty, I will not be disturbed thereat: I will bear forth on my head the Body and Blood of my Lord into the wilderness, and there, in the presence of the wild stones, in my altar vestments, will I sing: 'Give the King Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the King's son' and may Russia be preserved for ever, for Thou hast been gracious unto her!

"Concluding exhortation: O Author and Creator, make her not to be a laughing-stock unto strange nations, because of the craftiness of her evil-conscienced and ill-disposed servants."

CHAPTER XXII

THIS was the program of the sermon which Savély intended to deliver, and did deliver on the following day, before all the officials whom he had collected in the temple, winding up with this exordium not only his homily, but also his whole service to the Church.

The educated element of Stáry Górod decided that this was not a sermon but a revolution, and that if the archpriest were to continue talking in that spirit, the official personages would speedily find it awkward even to go out into the street. Even Savély's friends and acquaintances blamed him severely for his incautious stirring up of the passions of the lower classes. As to this stirring-up his friends joined forces with his enemies, and one universal chorus proclaimed: No, this cannot be endured! The newly-arrived strangers, Bornovolóhoff and Termosésóff constituted the sole exception to this general chorus. Although they had heard the sermon, they said nothing, and did not sulk. On the contrary, Termosésóff, on reaching home after the mass, strode up to Bornovolóhoff with folded arms, and recited, with peculiar joy: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."

"What is the meaning of that?" inquired his superior.

"It means that I am going to leave you. Live on and be happy, but do me a final favour at our parting: scribble a line to the authorities, stating that the priest concerning whom I wrote, this morning, forgetting all the respect due to the day, delivered an extremely seditious address, which Mr. Termosésóff, whom I have despatched, will have the honour of reporting by word of mouth."

"The devil take you! Write it, and I'll sign it."

The friends were entirely ready to separate, but their part-

ing was delayed for a minute by the sudden appearance of the poor and thoroughly frightened citizen Danílka, who flew in, all dripping and distracted, before the eyes of Bornovolókoff, and throwing himself at his feet, cried out: "*Bátiushka*, send me away, wherever your mercy pleases, but it is impossible for me to live here any longer! The townfolk are now assembled on the river-bank, and all are shaking their fists in my face."

Danílka explained that they had threatened him almost with death itself, because he had made a petition against the archpriest, and in proof of his assertion pointed to his wet and tattered shirt, declaring that the people had just pitched him off the bridge into the river.

"Splendid! . . . A riot!" joyfully exclaimed Termoséssoff, and putting on his cap in the middle of the room, he remarked to his superior: "You see how deeds are done!"

Termoséssoff departed, and in his wake Bornovolókoff departed in another direction, to disclose other disorders.

CHAPTER XXIII

TUBERÓZOFF's sermon was already beginning to be forgotten in Stáry Górod. But towards evening on the third day, there reached the town in a posting-cart, a pair of very original visitors—a long, sinewy policeman, and an official of the Consistory who was as fat as a peasant's pancake, and had a nose like a button.

They were envoys for Tuberózoff's soul: the archpriest was ordered to the Government capital under their surveillance. Within half an hour the entire town was informed of this, and a crowd collected at Tuberózoff's house, and within an hour the door of that house opened, and Savély issued forth from it, ready for the road. Natálya Nikoláevna escorted her husband, walking by his side, and bending her dove-like head against his elbow.

The two had managed to soothe each other, and now they did not unnerve themselves by a single word.

The crowd which had been awaiting the appearance of the archpriest, surged forward, and a murmur arose.

Tuberózoff took off his hat and bowed lower than his waist on all sides.

The murmur subsided; tears started to many eyes, and all began to cross themselves.

The post-cart, drawn by a tróika-team, which, through the considerate orders of the Commissioner of Police, had been hidden round the corner, drove softly up.

The archpriest raised his foot to the step and grasped the side-rail with his hand, and at the same moment, the policeman seized him from below by the elbow, while the Consistory official reached up for the other arm. . . . The old man

shuddered fastidiously, and his head sank upon his neck, like the head of a doll on a wire spring.

Natálya Nikoláevna sprang forward to her husband, and grasping his hand, whispered:

“Only, spare your life!”

Tuberózoff answered her:

“Do not worry: my life is already ended; now, ‘liv’ng has begun.’”

PART FOUR

CHAPTER I

“**L**IFE is ended and living has begun.” Tuberózoff had said at the last moment before his departure to render account. Immediately afterwards the swift tróika had mounted the hill and disappeared from view.

The throng which had seen the archpriest off, stood and stood, and then began to disperse; night came: all the courtyard gates and garden wickets were shut and bolted, and the moon, gazing down from the lofty sky, beheld in the bereaved abode of the archpriest only the bereaved Natálya Nikoláevna.

She made no haste to enter the house, but sat weeping, on the porch from which her husband had so lately descended. Sobbing, she beat her little head against the railing, and there was with her neither friend nor comforter! No, that is not so. She has a friend, and a powerful friend. . . .

Before the eyes of the weeping old woman, through the wicket-gate flung wide open, loomed up Deacon Akhílla, his curly head uncovered. He was clad in a short, thick kazák coat and full trousers, was laden with some sacks or other, and was leading behind him a pair of horses, each of which was weighted down with a heavy pack. Natálya Nikoláevna looked on in silence, while Akhílla led his horses into the yard, and having flung the packs on the ground, returned to the gate, locked it with the firm hand of the master, and thrust the key into his trousers pocket.

“Deacon! You have moved over to me!” exclaimed Natálya Nikoláevna, divining the deacon’s intentions.

“Yes, sorrowful mother, I have moved over to take care of you.”

They embraced and kissed, and Natálya Nikoláevna went away to sit up all night in her little bed-room, while Akhílla, having hitched his horses under the shed, spread out a kazák

felt on the porch, lay down flat on his back, and riveted his eyes on the starry sky.

He did not sleep all night long, but kept thinking one thought:

In what way he might now help his Minister of Justice? That was quite a different affair from thrashing Varnávka. In this case he must apply his mind. But what then; what could be done with the mind alone, and without force? If only he had also the Magic Carpet of the fairy tales, or the Seven-league Boots, or . . . the Cap of Invisibility! Then he would know how to do a very clever thing, but as it was . . . The deacon positively could not tell what he ought to undertake, but it was indispensable that he should undertake something.

Having got as far as the Magic Carpet and the Cap of Invisibility, Akhílla, who was utterly unaccustomed to any mental artifices, felt as though he had been relieved of an intolerable burden, sighed, and flew away himself on the Magic Carpet. He went, unseen by any one, in the cap and the boots, to one after another of the important personages to whom he had not hoped to make his way without the cap and the boots, and jogged first one and then another of these sleeping persons in the ribs, and began to say to them: "Do not harm Priest Savély, for you will regret it yourself, and you can't undo it."

And lo! on hearing this invisible voice, all the important personages turned over in their luxurious beds, and all sprang up, and all began to shout: "O, for God's sake, intercede as quickly as possible for Priest Savély!" But all this, in our age, is possible only when one has the Seven-league Boots, and the Cap of Invisibility, and it was well that Akhílla remembered them betimes, and supplied himself with them. Thanks to them alone the deacon was able, in his nankeen cassock, to penetrate to a palace, so resplendent that its brilliance blinded him to such a degree that he was not even glad that he had managed to get there. Perchance the places where he had already been would have sufficed,

but the Seven-league Boots went galloping on, and dragged him to a place where he could not make out anything at all, because of the intolerable light, and forgetting all about Father Savély, and the object of his mission, he tossed about, anxious only as to how he might get back, and all the while, the agile Seven-league Boots kept bearing him higher, and higher and he had forgotten to inquire the word which would make them stop. . . .

"I'm on fire, by heaven, I'm on fire!" shrieked the deacon, hiding himself behind a small, darkish spot which flashed before him, and was amazed when he heard from that spot the gentle little voice of Nikolái Afanásievitch.

"Have done, father deacon, with sleeping and shrieking that you are on fire! Is it necessary that we should all burn up with shame!" said the dwarf, shading the deacon's face from the sun with his tiny body.

Akhílla sprang up, and rushing to the bucket, drank down two iron dippers of cold water, one on top of the other.

"What do you mean, Nikóla? Of what shame are you talking?" he inquired, as he moistened his curls with the water.

"And where is our archpriest? Where is he?"

"The archpriest, dearest Nikolávka,—well, hunt for him! They carried him away yesterday. . . ."

"What do you mean by 'hunt for him,' sir? We must rescue him!"

"My dear little dove, that's precisely what I have been thinking about all night and I can invent nothing."

"That's exactly the point—anybody can fling a stone into the water, but not everybody can pull it out again."

And Nikolái Afanásievitch, his boots squeaking as he went, hobbled into the house to the archpriestess, but after remaining there not more than a minute, took the deacon with him, and directed his way to the Commissioner of Police. From the Commissioner, they went to the judge, and the dwarf consulted with both of them, and learned nothing cheerful from either. They were sorry for Tuberózoff, said that, although the archpriest had not done well in preaching such an

inflammatory sermon, yet he had been treated with inordinate severity.

And what was to be done now? What should they set about? And, on the whole, ought they to undertake or do anything in defence of Tuberózoff, or not? As to that, not a word.

The dwarf, as he listened to the diffuse but somewhat empty speeches of the officials, merely sighed and fidgeted, but Akhilla stared, with blinking eyes, first at one, and then at the other, and in his thoughts brought the whole thing round again to the point, that if he only had the Magic Carpet or even the Cap of Invisibility all would be well—but as it was, what could one undertake? Nothing.

“The only thing I can do,” said the judge suddenly, “is to write a letter to the procurator of the province: he is my colleague, and assuredly he will not refuse to intervene in person, and intercede for the archpriest.”

This pleased the Commissioner of Police greatly, but although Nikolái Afanásievitch was not pleased with it, still he considered it inexpedient to offer any objection.

They merely considered how they might despatch the letter. The post did not go for two days, and a special messenger would be, in the opinion of the two officials, too showy a measure, and moreover, the postmaster's wife, the friend of Termosésóff, who was suspected by every one, as Akhilla pointed out, of having denounced Tuberózoff, might write information to that active individual by the same special messenger.

On hearing of this difficulty, the deacon immediately undertook to remove it all, and announced that if they would only prepare the letter, he would answer with his head, that it would be delivered on the morrow at its address; but the means which he would employ to effect this, Akhilla kept secret, and begged that no questions be put to him on that point.

His offer was not refused, and the matter was settled. Towards evening, the official secretly handed the deacon a

letter of no importance whatsoever, and an hour after twilight a huge black horseman rode softly up to Father Zakháriya's house, and tapping lightly on the window with his hand, called the "gentle priest" by name.

Zakháriya opened the sash, and seeing the horseman, inquired:

"Is it you, you terror?"

"Hush! Maintain strict silence and quiet," replied the horseman mysteriously restraining his restive steed with his knees.

Zakháriya cast a glance to the right and left along the deserted bank of the river, and whispered:

"Whither are you going, and on what errand?"

"I can explain nothing to you, because I have given my word," replied the horseman mysteriously, "but all I ask of you is, not to search for me tomorrow, and not to inquire why I am going. . . . Well—although I have given my word, I'll tell you an allegory:

'The Kazák holds his course to the North,
The kazák will not rest.'

and in my cap—

'There's an impeachment of the vile Hetman
To Tzar Peter from Kotchubéy. . . .'

"Do you understand?"

"No, I understand nothing."

"That's as it should be according to the allegory."

And thereupon the horseman added, smiting his breast with his fist: "Only you must know, Father Zakháriya, that it is not a kazák who is riding, but Deacon Akhílla, and that my heart cannot endure the insult to him, and I have no idea in my head how to help him."

Having spoken thus, the deacon loosened his horse's bridle, pressed him with his knees, and flew rather than galloped off, his curls, the vast skirts and sleeves of his nankeen cassock, and the tail and sweeping mane of his horse fluttering against the dark-blue background of the nocturnal sky.

CHAPTER II

IT was not without cause that Nikolái Afanásievitch expected nothing from the letter with which Deacon Akhílla had galloped off. Akhílla rode about for a whole week, and on returning home, with drooping head, and on an exhausted horse, replied that nothing had come, and nothing could come of that letter.

"Why so?" Akhílla was asked.

"It's very simple! Because Father Savély himself said to me: 'Drop all these efforts, my friend; there are no champions for us clergy. Ask every one to do me the favour not to defend me.'"

And the deacon would say no more on the subject.

"Well," he said to himself, "if there is no longer among us a single clever man who can tell how to defend him, then what's the use of worrying in vain? We must obey his orders, and not meddle."

Akhílla was far more ready to narrate in what situation he had found Tuberózoff, and what had happened to him during that week. This is what he reported:

"The Bishop is not even particularly stern toward him, and even not at all wrathful, and has given him over to this torture merely as a matter of policy, in order not to offer opposition to the officials of the secular power. For that reason alone did he summon Father Savély, yes sir! And Father Savély might rid himself altogether of this fault, and return home, for the Bishop is secretly on his side . . . yes, sir! And he was secretly instructed by the Bishop only the other day, to go to the Governor, and acknowledge his error, and ask pardon, yes sir! But Father Savély, owing to his strong character, made a refractory answer. . . . 'I do not acknowl-

edge that I am in fault,' he said, 'and therefore I have nothing to beg pardon for!' And thereby he incensed the Bishop also, yes, sir! But even now this anger is nothing particular, because the Bishop has drawn a line through the decision of the Consistory concerning the institution of investigation about the sermon, and has quieted down everything without any publicity, by appointing Father Savély to the post of reader at the Episcopal residence,—yes sir!"

"And is he discharging the duties of reader now?" asked Zakháriya.

"Yes, sir; he reads the Hours, and the Lessons from the Old Testament at Feasts, but he does not alter his custom, and to the strategical question of the Bishop: 'Wherein are you at fault?' he, with still greater strategy, replied, as though from stupidity: 'In this under-cassock, Your Grace,'¹ and thereby earned himself something worse. Yes, sir!"

"O-o-oh!" exclaimed Zakháriya, and shook his head despairingly, covering his ears with his tiny hands.

"He has hired from the quarter-master of gendarmes a tiny yellow chamber in the monastery suburb, for two rubles and a half a month, and goes himself to the river, with a pitcher, for his water. But he has become very much sharpened in face and figure, and commanded that you, Natályia Nikoláevna, should make all possible haste to come to him.

"I will go, I will go tomorrow," replied the weeping arch-priestess.

"Yes, sir; only listen to all the news. That procurator, to whom I had the letter, says: 'Say, this is no affair of mine, you have your own officials,' and he did not give me the letter, but ordered me to give his compliments,—here you have his compliments, if you want them. And Mr. Termoséssoff bade me remember him to all of you; I met him in the town; he was going rapidly somewhere, and said: 'Akh, stop a bit, if you please, deacon,' he said, 'here by the gate: I'll bring

¹ Father Savély resented being degraded to the post of lay-reader, and showed it by this reference to the obligatory garb of an undisciplined man. TRANSLATOR.

you out something directly; your postmistress and her daughters forced their album on me just before I left, for me to write verses in it, and I carried it off, and there is no one by whom to send it back. Do me the favour to give it to them, when you return.' I said to myself: 'The Evil One take you!' 'Hand it over,' I said, in order to get free of him, and I took it."

The deacon drew from the pocket of his cassock a thin album, of variegated paper, and read aloud:

"On the last of all these pages
We write four lines to show
How great is our respect for you.
Will it get torn out? O, no!"

"There's his respect for all of you, and you may accept it, if you have any use for it."

And Akhilla hurled the album with Termoséssoff's respects, on the table, in the presence of the public, and went off, straight from his journey, to sleep in the stable. Early in the morning the dwarf awakened him, and seating himself by the deacon's side, on a truss of hay, inquired:

"Well, sir, and what more are we to do now?"

"I don't know, Nikolávka, truly, I don't know!"

"Or is this to be the end of it?" said Nikólai Afanásievitch caustically.

"Why, my dear Nikóla . . . where else can we interfere?"

"Where can we interfere, sir?"

"Yes; where will you poke your finger in? The wolves are sitting everywhere, you see."

"Well, but I, my dear sir, am an old hare: why should I fear the wolves? Let the wolves devour me."

The dwarf rose to his feet, and indifferently offered his hand to Akhilla in farewell, but when the latter tried to detain him, he wrenched himself impatiently away, and flushing scarlet, added:

"Yes, sir! 'Tis not well! And a giant like you, into the bargain!—Let me alone: the old hare is not afraid of the

wolves: let them devour him if they like!" and with this, Nikolái Afanásievitch, clearing his throat, clambered into his large, covered britchka, and drove away.

Akhílla followed him to the gate, but the britchka was no longer visible. On that same day the deacon despatched Natályá Nikoláevna to her husband, and remained alone in the discredited house.

CHAPTER III

SAVÉLY was crowded out of the minds of the educated class in town, in the most successful manner, by Termosésoff's poetry. The concluding passage of this poem, and the scandalous position in which, thanks to him, the energetic postmaster's wife and her daughters found themselves, completely swept the old archpriest from the local stage; every one was delighted, and every one was convulsed with laughter. They alluded to Termosésoff as "a sharp beast," they mentioned the archpriest rarely, and then as "that tiresome maniac."

Day followed day; one month passed, and another began. The town nourished itself on news which does not concern our business; now a complaint reached the Commissioner of Police from some girl about the commander of the squad of disabled soldiers, Poverdóvnya; now Akhílla, as he sat on the porch of the post-station learned from passing travellers that Prince Bornovolókoff was said to have died suddenly; and still Tuberózoff remained in exile, and his friends solidly and steadily insisted that "there was nothing to be done" in the matter. The archpriest's enemies proved rather better than his friends; at any rate, some of them did not forget him. For example, the artful wife of the postmaster—who could not forget the heavy insult inflicted on her by Termosésoff, and still more could not forgive society for its joy over her discomfiture—undertook his defence, and took it into her head to demonstrate to that society that she, all by herself, was more dexterous, more clever and long-sighted, and even more honourable, than all the rest of them put together.

In addition to this, Providence sent down to her an oppor-

tunity, of which she took advantage, again not without subtlety, and not without malice. She conceived the idea of blinding society by an intolerable brilliancy, and raising her authority in its eyes to an unprecedented height.

Madame Mordokanáki, a Petersburg lady, was spending the summer at her farm about six versts from the town. The elderly husband of this young and extremely handsome person, had once upon a time, while he was a tax-farmer, stood as godfather to one of the postmistress's daughters. This appeared to the postmaster's wife to be sufficient excuse for inviting the young wife of old Mordokanáki to the Name-day feast of her husband's god-daughter, and in the presence of everybody, of unexpectedly presenting to her, as to a well-known philanthropist and patroness of the Church, a petition on behalf of the persecuted Tuberózoff.

The postmistress's calculation was not altogether a bad one: the young and fabulously wealthy Petersburg patroness enjoyed influence in the capital, and great respect from the local government authorities. If only she would take a notion, she could do more, in any case, to help the archpriest under discipline, than could any one else. But would she be willing? But the whole of society would entreat her.

This lady was bored by loneliness, and did not refuse to honour the ball of the postmaster's wife by her presence. The crafty postmistress triumphed; she no longer had any doubt that she would dumbfound the aristocrats of the district by her unexpected initiative in favour of old Tuberózoff,—an initiative in which all the rest, on perceiving the situation, would involuntarily join, though merely in the rôle of chorus, in the part of persons of secondary importance.

The postmistress cherished this sweet thought in secret, but, at last, the day of its realization dawned.

CHAPTER IV

THE day of the festival began in the postmistress's house, after the manner customary in the district, with morning refreshments. As she received the guests the postmistress exulted, on perceiving that not one of them had anything serious in mind, that all cares concerning the exiled old man had evaporated and been forgotten.

The guests dropped in, in gay and joyful mood; the first to arrive was the "District Commandant," the invalided Captain Poverdóvnya, a full-eyed, sandy-complexioned officer from the ranks of the commissary clerks. He brought to the heroine of the feast some verses of his own composition; then came the ladies, the men, and, at last, Akhílla the deacon.

Akhílla also was merry. He handed the Name-day girl an altar-bread, which he drew from beneath his cassock, and ejaculated:

"Virgin Birthgiver's bread, ma'am!"

Then, on the threshold, gentle Father Zakháriya made his appearance, and making his bow, said:

"May the Lord bless thee! I congratulate you on the day of your Guardian-Angel!" and handed to the young girl, with two fingers, precisely the same sort of altar-bread as Akhílla had brought a few minutes before, saying: "Please accept the Virgin-Birthgiver's bread!"

Having bowed to every one, the gentle priest spread the skirts of his cassock wide apart, seated himself, got his breath, and remarked:

"The service was pretty long today, and the weather is very hot."

"Yes, it was very long."

"Yes, sir; we prayed well, glory to the Saviour!"

And Zakháriya, turning the sleeve of his new cassock up over his elbow, accepted a cup of tea.

At that moment, the doctor presented himself before him, smiling and rubbing his lips, and inquired how many Virgin-Birthgiver's altar-breads there were, as a rule, at one mass?

"One, sir, one," replied Zakháriya. "Our All-holy sovereign Lady, the Birth-giver of God was one, and a bit is taken from one altar-bread in her honour; yes, sir. And there is another bread, in honour of the martyrs, in honour of the Apostles, Prophets . . ."

"So there is but one Virgin-Birthgiver bread?"

"Only one; yes sir, only one."

"Well, here's the father Deacon who says there are two."

"He's lying, sir; yes, sir, he is lying,—” replied good-natured Father Zakháriya, with an affable smile.

Akhílla would have liked to pursue a policy of silence, but perceiving that the doctor had seized him by the sleeve, he had to tear himself free, and rumbled out in his deep bass voice:

"I never said so."

"You didn't? Then what altar-bread did you bring?"

"One that had been blessed," replied the deacon, and bending down under the table, he remarked: "It seems to me that I saw my pipe here a while ago. . . ."

"That happens with him sometimes," said Father Zakháriya, faintly echoing the doctor's merry laugh. "He does invent something occasionally, but he does it without any object whatever; yes, sir, he means nothing by it."

On this occasion, it was intended that the morning refec-tion of the feast should end with tea only. The postmistress remarked, with considerable elegant simplicity, that all her hospitality was being prepared for the evening, that she had invited no one during the day, but that, on the other hand, she would do her best to have them well fed and satisfied in the evening, and to make them all merry.

And now that famous evening has arrived.

CHAPTER V

THE family of the postmistress welcomed their important Petersburg guest.

Madame Mordokanáki, tall, white and massive, made the assembly happy, and in her presence everything seemed to grow dim and paltry. Even Dánka Biziúkhin crumpled up before her. The hostess did not spare her flattering words, and surrounded her guest with all the most interesting persons, enjoining upon Captain Poverdóvnya and Varnáva Prepótensky to entertain her in every possibly way. The individuals who were in the least awkward in conversation were eliminated. These individuals were: the Mayor, who had a habit of employing in conversation the popular expression, "a spit in the mouth for all I care"; the old Major from the Caucasus, because of whom there had sprung up the by-word in town: "as stupid as a Caucasian Major," and, in company with them, Deacon Akhílla. These three individuals were artfully hidden in a cool store-room, where stood the wine and the refreshments which had been made ready. These exiles sat there very comfortably, with one candle, and were not in the least troubled by their banishment from the van-guard. On the contrary, they found themselves very well off there. Without ceremony, and in the closest possible proximity to the refreshments, they carried on a most animated conversation, and even fell to philosophizing. The Major insisted on being informed "whence comes insolence?" and explained its origin by over-indulgent spoiling, and brought forward divers proofs; but Akhílla objected to the multitude of causes, and said that insolence arises from two causes only: "from anger, and still more frequently, from liquor."

The Major reflected, and agreed, that, as a matter of fact, there is an insolence which springs from liquor.

"It is true, I tell you," explained the deacon, and having drunk off a large wine-glass of liqueur, he began to enlarge upon his theme.— "I will even tell you about my own case. I am very fine when in liquor, because I am never impudent, and never have any evil thoughts; well, but on the other hand, my brethren, I'm deadly fond of bragging when I am tipsy. And that's a fact! 'Tis not that I do it deliberately, but just because I'm made that way by nature. I begin to invent such things about myself as fairly amaze me afterwards, and I cannot sufficiently wonder where I got all those absurd lies at such times."

The Mayor and the Major burst out laughing.

"Truly!" pursued the deacon. "All of a sudden I begin, for example, to tell how the parishioners have been to the Bishop to get me made their priest, a thing which even I myself do not desire; or on another occasion, I assert that the merchants of the province are entreating that I be advanced to the rank of Proto-deacon; or . . ." The deacon cast a glance around the store-room, and whispered: "And once on a time, I blurted out that in my youth I had been secretly betrothed to the daughter of the Secretary to the Consistory! I can tell you that I repented it with not a little bitterness afterwards, when they began to repeat to me this insolence of mine."

"But if that were to come to the ears of the Secretary, calamity for you would follow on the spot," remarked the Major.

"Certainly sir, what else! And what a calamity, too!" assented the deacon, and tossed off some more of the liqueur.

"Yes, and as long as I have got on the subject, here's another thing I'll tell you," he went on, lowering his voice still more. "Once upon a time, in consequence of this absurd lying of mine, I got myself into such a scrape that I came pretty near to subjecting myself to public torture. Haven't you heard about that?"

"No, we have not."

"You don't say so, sir! It was a terrible affair; I might have been hung, in accordance with the very first point of the law."

"O Lord!"

"Yes, sir; and that's not all, either, that my head might have rolled on the public square; but I might also have been commemorated, along with Grishka Otrépyeff ¹ and Mazepa, with anathema, by the deacon, on Orthodoxy Day, ² for seven thousand three hundred years."

"It cannot be!" exclaimed the Major, twisting about on his chair.

"Why can't it? It would have been very simple, if a kind man had not saved me."

"Do tell us about it, father deacon."

"Just wait until I get a little drink of vodka, and I will."

Akhilla swallowed still another wine-glass of liqueur, and proceeded to the continuation of his narrative concerning his crime against the first point of the law.

¹ Grigóry Otrépyeff was the first "False Dmitry" supposed to be a fugitive monk, who seized the throne after Boris Godunóff, pretending to be the son of Ivan the Terrible, who had been killed at the order of Godunóff. TRANSLATOR.

² The first Sunday in Lent, when heretics—all non-Orthodox—used to be anathemetized, and the triumph of Orthodoxy is celebrated. TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER VI

“**T**HIS scrape,” began the deacon, “hung on the fact, that just before Easter I went to the Government capital, and hitched my horse and the horse of Seryóga, the chanter, up in a pair. Seryóga went because of his children, and I—well, just because I took a fancy; the deuce only knows why I went. Simply for the sake of seeing my acquaintances. We arrived, in this fashion, close to the town; and there the bridge had been swept away, and the river had to be crossed on a ferry-boat. More people than you could count were waiting, and in the ferry-man’s cottage a miserable little soldier was selling vodka. Well, while we were waiting for our turn, we went in out of the cold and drank a couple of drams. There was every sort of people there; lay-brethren from the monastery, drozhky-drivers, and soldiers, and government clerks,—and they’re the most noxious sort of folks,—and also some of our fellow ecclesiastics. There were also some good acquaintances of ours from our district,—well, and by way of keeping up the acquaintance, we crushed down a couple more drams apiece. And there was a clerk there, appointed to the ferry, a voluble rascal, and he began to stir us up. I said: ‘Go back, brother, to the place whence you came; go, you’re not kin to us.’ And he said: ‘I’m an officer of my Tzar!’—‘I’m all the same as a staff-officer myself,’ said I. ‘The staff-officer,’ says he, “is the priest, and you’re a subaltern to him.’ I said that it was true I stood lower at God’s altar than the priest, by the rank, ‘but in politics,’ said I, ‘we are both equal.’ A dispute arose. I waxed warm from those same little drams of liquor, and I said, ‘you know you are a paltry little pettigogger! You can’t understand God’s Scriptures, you haven’t any bowels in your head,’

I said. 'Just you tell me now—has there ever been a priest on the throne?'—'No,' said he, 'there has not.' 'Exactly so,' said I, 'there never has been. But there has been a deacon, and he was invested with the crown.'—'Who was he? and when did that happen?' said he. 'That *when* is precisely the point,' says I. 'I'm no *arikmetician*, and I don't understand those years in my head very accurately, but you just take and read in the books, and see who Grigóry Otrépyeff was before he reigned instead of Dmítry, and then you'll find out what deacons are worth!'— 'Well,' says he, 'that was Otrépyeff, and you're a long way from being Otrépyeff.'—And I was a bit tipsy, and I bawled at him: 'And how can you know that I'm a long way behind him? Perhaps, now, I'm very close to him indeed. He resembled Dmítry,' said I, 'but perhaps I'll set up for some Franz-Venezian or Mahmoud or other in one person, and then you'll see me reigning!'— No sooner had I said this, my dear fellows, than that clerk instantly uttered a yell, made a rumpus, called for witnesses, and paper. They seized me, bound me, put me in a cart with the sotsky¹ and carried me off. And may the Lord grant perpetual good health, and after his death the kingdom of heaven to the Colonel of Gendarmes, Albert Kazimirovitch, who was in our secret police at that time. He summoned me to him in the morning, called out his wife, and said: 'Take a look at the Pretender, my dear!' He laughed, and laughed at me, and let me go.—'Go along with you, Father Mahmoud,' said he, 'and hereafter swallow your drinks in moderate numbers.'—God grant him many years!" repeated the father deacon again and once more raising the wine-glass filled with liquor, he added: "Here, even now, I'll drink to his health!"

"Well, that rescued you from a great calamity," drawled the Major.

"Certainly it did. And that's why I say—he was a good man. A Pole does not love the authorities, but if there's

¹ A policeman elected by the peasants. TRANSLATOR.

anything opposed to the authorities, he is lenient with it.¹

About midnight this conversation of the three recluses was interrupted; their time arrived for joining the company: they were summoned to the table.

When the deacon, who was somewhat the worse for liquor, and had assumed an air of intense dignity, entered the hall where stood the table already laid for supper, with chairs placed around it in a dense ring, Captain Poverdóvnya took Akhílla by the elbow, and leading him aside to a small table, where they were drinking vodka, he said:

"Come, now, deacon, give the ladies a good ogling."

"But why?" inquired the deacon.

"So that they may take notice of you."

"Well, yes; get along with you! As though I were going to think about your ladies! What have I, a widower,² to do with looking at them? I'd better drink a couple of drops of vodka, which I can do without sin."

And having made this answer, Akhílla did take a drink, and every one else drank a bumper apiece, before supper. The sole exception was Father Zakháriya, because any sort of liquor made his heart reel. Urge him as they would to drink something, he replied to all entreaties:

"No, no, release me! I cannot drink liquor, absolutely no liquor at all."

"Everybody is drinking today," they argued with him.

"Really, really that is so, but I cannot."

"Even a hen drinks," deacon Akhílla backed up the would-be treaters.

"Well, let the hen do it! . . . It's pretty stupid of you, my dear fellow, to hold a hen up to me as an example. . . ."

"You're worse than a hen, Father," replied Akhílla.

¹ It is evident from the Colonel of Gendarmes's name that he was a Pole. TRANSLATOR.

² In Russia a man must be married before he can be ordained even Sub-deacon; and he cannot marry a second time. This applies to the parish priests. TRANSLATOR.

"This is too much! How am I worse than a hen? This is too much!"

"Well, if you can't drink any liquor, then you might, at least, take a drink of sherry, for the sake of policy!"

Zakháriya, perceiving that they would not let him alone, sighed, and, accepting a wine-glass from the hand of the deacon, replied:

"Well, then, let it be sherry; please give me some sherry."

CHAPTER VII

THE ball entered upon another phase of development.

As soon as every one was seated at the table, Captain Poverdóvnya immediately managed to get on his feet again, and turning towards the philanthropist from St. Petersburg, he began to read:

"I bid thee welcome, dweller
In another world than this!
Thee, sent by the Creator
To be my lyre's bliss.

Wing thy way from azure ether, from the heights down here to me,
Here rapture most kind-hearted and sincere awaiteth thee.
To touch the viands of this banquet do thou deign,
Leave, for a time, we beg thee, the Emyrean of thy reign."

The aristocrat of the tax-farmer race, listened to this poem, blushing faintly, and took from Poverdóvnya's hand the sheet of paper, upon which, in an uneducated copyist's hand, ornamented with a thousand erasures, were inscribed the verses he had read.

The hostess was in raptures, but each one of her guests had his own private opinion as to the appropriateness of Poverdóvnya's verses, as well as of their relative merits and defects. Opinions differed: the Commissioner of Police, cavalry-Captain Porókhontzeff, thought that it was a very fine and amiable thing on the part of Captain Poverdóvnya, under any circumstances, to recite the verses. Prepótensky, on the other hand, deemed it stupid; and the deacon argued, that it was, simply, very crafty, and as he sat next to Poverdóvnya, he whispered in the captain's ear:

"I perceive, brother, that you are a great rogue where the ladies are concerned!"

But, at any rate, after Poverdóvnya's verses, the most unfeigned jollity took possession of the entire company at the table, which did not please the postmaster's wife at all. The chatter never ceased, and there was not a single pause, of which the hostess could avail herself to bring up the subject of the exiled archpriest. In the meanwhile, the guest, evidently, was not bored; and when the anxious postmistress, at the end of the supper, appealed to her with the question, whether she had not found it tiresome? the lady replied, with the most sincere cheerfulness, that she was unable to thank her sufficiently for the pleasure afforded her by the guests, and added, that if there was anything which she could regret, it was only that she had been so tardy in making acquaintance with the deacon and Captain Poverdóvnya. And Madame Mordokanáki did not exaggerate; the straightforwardness of Akhílla and the captain had aroused her strong interest. Poverdóvnya, on hearing this statement about himself, immediately made a bow in reply. Neither did the deacon remain insensible to this praise: he nudged Prepótensky in the ribs, and said to him:

"You see, you fool, how we are respected, while nothing is said about you."

"You are a fool yourself," retorted the nettled Varnáva in a whisper.

Poverdóvnya, having thought for a moment, grasped Akhílla firmly by the hand, rose with him, and in the name of both, recited:

"We shall hold thy memory sacred,
Guard it many happy years.
We pray to thee, O Radiant Spirit,
And may our prayers reach thine ears!"

Then, covered with applause, they sat down.

"There, you see, again you don't know any verses," deacon Akhílla reproached Varnáva.

But at that moment, Poverdóvnya jumped up again, and declaimed, turning to the mistress of the house:

"Matryóna is thy name,
Above all women is thy fame,
Hurrah!"

"What a man that captain is! He's the life of the company!" the hostess lauded Poverdóvnya.

"But still you have nothing to say!" Akhílla nagged Var-náva.

"All of you recite verses!"

"Yes! All! Let the Commissioner of Police begin!"

"All right, I'll begin!" replied the Commissioner of Police.
"Let there be no ceremony: let every one who can recite."

"Begin! Why do you delay, captain! Begin!"

Captain Porókhontzeff rose, elevated his goblet to the level of his face, and gazing through his wine at the fire, began:

"When the despot cast from him his power,
To lull Russia, his victim, to sleep,
To ruin surely and her glory to lower,
Freedom's voice rang out firm o'er the deep.
And our land, at that cry of her brothers,
Might, with one bound, from her chains have leaped free.
Then, like dawn-fearing thief, shunning others,
Sham'd, from poet and friend thou didst flee,
When he called; sins of Jew and Sarmatian
I'll assume, and of converts to Rome,
If only the grand Russian nation
May receive back its freedom at home.
Hurrah!"

"Everybody is reciting, but you have nothing!" Akhílla again attacked Prepótensky: "Say what you will brother, if you drink and can't say anything, you're not a man at all, but nothing more than a leathern bottle of liquor."

"Why do you worry me with your leather bottle! You're a leather bottle yourself!" retorted the schoolmaster.

"Wha-a-a-at?" roared Akhílla, taking offence. "I'm a

leather bottle, am I? . . . And you dare to say that to me so impudently, that I'm a leather bottle? . . ."

"Yes, of course you're a leather bottle."

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"You can't recite anything yourself, so there now!"

"I can't recite anything? Akh, you stupid man! Why, if I only take a notion, I can recite something that will make you skip like a leaf along the grass, and listen to it standing!"

"Come on, come on, try it, recite!"

"And so I will; and, by the way, you will now be able to see that my upper jaw really does move. . . ."

And thereupon Akhílla rose to his feet, surveyed the entire company with wide-open eyes, and riveting them on the salt-cellar which stood in the centre of the table, began, in his deep velvety bass:

"Gra-a-a-ant, O Looord, a pro-os-perrr-ous and peeeeeaceful li-i-i-ife, heeeee-alth and saaaaafe-ty, and fur-therrr-ance in all things, as also coooon-quest over His Enemies, un-to our most God-fearing Sovereign, Alex-an-der Nikoláevitch, Emperor of All the Russias, and to all the Reigning House, and preserve Them for Many Years."

Akhílla raised his voice higher and higher, his forehead, cheek-bones, temples and the whole upper jaw of his broad face became more and more completely covered with a thick, dark-red hue and with perspiration: his eyes protruded, white spots made their appearance on his cheeks, round the corners of his mouth, and his mouth was opened like a brazen trumpet, and from it, with a peal, and a crash and a roar flew forth a "Many Years" which made every inanimate object in the whole house quiver, and the animate beings rise from their seats, and with eyes still riveted in amazement upon Akhílla's open mouth, take up, in universal chorus, the moment he uttered the last sound: "Many, many, ma-a-a-any years, many ye-e-e-ears!"

Varnáva alone tried to stick to his occupation all this while, and feed himself, but Akhílla dragged him to his feet by

main force, and holding him by the arm, sang: "Many, many, ma-a-a-any years, many years!"

The Mayor of the town sent Akhílla a piece of blue paper across the back of his neighbour.

"What's this?" asked Akhílla.

"And all Their Council. Strike up, 'and all Their Council and Their Army,'" requested the Mayor.

The deacon put the five-ruble note in his pocket, and thundered out:

"And to aaaaall Their Coun-cil and Their Aaaaarrrrrr-my, ma-a-a-any years!"

Akhílla executed this in a manner which so completely outdid even his own former efforts, that when he finished the "many years," the only one who ventured to chant the refrain was Father Zakháriya, who was accustomed to his voice and the Mayor of the town: all the other guests fell back in their seats, and half lay upon their chairs, clutching the table or one another.

The deacon was comforted.

"You have a rare bass," the Petersburg lady, who was the first to recover from fright, said to him.

"Good gracious, I didn't do it to show off my voice, but merely to prove that I am not a coward, and that I know something to recite."

"Really, really! . . . And who is the coward here?" interposed Father Zakháriya.

"Why, in the first place, Father Zakháriya, you, sir? For you know you can't talk straight with your superiors: you stammer."

"That is true," confirmed Father Zakháriya: "in such cases, I actually do stammer before my superiors. Well, and you, how about you yourself? Aren't you afraid of your superiors?"

"I? . . . It makes no difference to me: it's all the same to me whether it's the Bishop or some plain man. The Bishop says to me, 'thus and so, my dear brother,' and I do the

same to him: 'thus and so, Your Grace,' I say: and that's all there is to it."

"Is that true, Father Zakháriya?" the doctor, who was persecuting the deacon, begged to inquire.

"He lies," replied Benefáktoff calmly, never taking his kindly eyes from the deacon.

"And does he, also, tumble down head over heels on the ground before the Bishop?"

"He does, sir."

"Never! That's not my way," trumpeted the deacon, throwing out his whole chest.— "And, moreover, I couldn't do it. If I had to pay attention to everybody, life would not be worth living to me. Right now, I have some one and he's not the Bishop either, although he's a Most Reverend also, and is a hundred times more important than he, who looks at me every day."

"Are you speaking of me?" inquired the doctor.

"Why should I be speaking of you? No, I'm not speaking of you."

"Of whom then?"

"Is it a long time since you read the latest newspapers?"

"And what do they print there?" inquired the special guest, growing as merry as a child.

"Why, that by the order of the chief Archpriest Bazhánoff himself, the Court Choir-master has been sent all over Russia, to pick out bassos for the Imperial choir. He has the rank of General, and an Order, and in spite of the fact that he is a civilian, the Bishop is just nothing in comparison with him, because, you know, even the Emperor's coachman, who rides on the box, is a colonel. Well, sir, and this Choir-master has been ordered to travel secretly, as though he were a plebeian, so that too many bassos should not turn up, and so that he may be able to hear them at his leisure."

The deacon found some difficulty in continuing, but the doctor spurred him on.

"Well, and what comes next?"

"This comes next, that the Imperial Choir-master has already been over four weeks in our town, that's what! And I see how he comes in, in a blue great-coat on Sundays and takes his stand among the common citizens, and listens to me. Now, what would any other man do in my place? The probabilities are, that he would fawn on this imperial envoy, invite him to his house, treat him to vodka, entertain him with tea; isn't that so? But I do nothing of the sort. Although you're the imperial Choir-master, and I, my good man, no . . . you're playing pranks . . . deal with me according to the law, and if you won't do that, then adieu. I have the honour to salute you."

"Is he making all that up?" the doctor appealed to father Zakháriya.

"Yes, sir, he is," replied father Zakháriya, calmly, according to his wont. "He has been drinking a bit too much, so you will hear no truth from him now until tomorrow, and he will do nothing but brag in his visions."

"No, it's the truth I'm telling."

"Come, that will do," interrupted father Zakháriya. "And you have no occasion to take offence my dear fellow, no occasion to take offence, when you have such a faculty for visions after you have indulged in liquor."

Akhílla did not take offence. It seemed to him that after this people would not believe him, or believe that he was not a coward, and that was something he could not possibly endure, and he swore to his bravery, and demanded a tournament, without delay, and of the most desperate sort.

"I want to prove to everybody that I'm braver than all the rest, and prove it I will."

"Don't boast of that, father deacon," said the Major. "Particularly as you yourself have said that you have a weakness . . . for bragging."

"I don't care, I have a weakness, but I will boast. I'm braver than anybody here."

"Don't boast. It sometimes happens that a brave man turns

out to be a coward, and again it sometimes happens that a coward does something one does not expect. Yes, sir, yes, sir, there have been examples of that."

"I don't care, come on!"

"But who is to come, sir? If you will permit me, it is better that I should present an example."

"All right, present it."

CHAPTER VIII

“**W**HEN I was transferred from the Caucasus,” began the Major, “we had a Colonel, a very jolly commander and officer. He had a golden sword for bravery. We went through the Hungarian campaign in the year ’48. One night it became necessary to send some volunteers, and a drinking-bout was in progress. The Colonel said: ‘How many volunteers are there?’ And the adjutant replied: ‘one hundred and twenty.’ ‘Oho!’ says the Colonel, who is playing preference at the time. ‘That’s a great many,’ says he. ‘Aren’t there some cowards among them?’ The adjutant says: ‘No.’ ‘And if there should be?’— ‘I don’t think there are any, Mr. Colonel,’ says he. ‘Well, all right,’ he says, ‘get them together.’ They were assembled. ‘Come now,’ says the Colonel, ‘let’s put them to the test. Who is the bravest? Who shall be the leader?’— ‘Such and such a one, Sergyéff, I think. or Ivanóff. Call him hither,’ says he.

“‘Will you go as commander?’ ‘Yes, Your High Well-born.’ ‘You are not a coward?’ ‘No, Your High Well-born.’ ‘Not a coward?’ ‘No.’ ‘Well, if you are not a coward, pull my moustache.’ The soldier shifted from foot to foot where he stood, and quailed. They called up another, and this man did the same, and so did the third, and the fifth, and the tenth. On that occasion, they all showed themselves to be cowards.”

“Ah, devil take him! There’s a contrivance for you!” exclaimed Akhílla merrily. “‘Coward, pull my moustache!’ Ha, ha, ha! . . . That’s capital! Captain, my friend, let Varnáva touch your moustache.”

“Gladly,” replied the captain.

Prepótensky refused, but they provoked him by malicious jeers at his pusillanimity, and he consented.

Akhílla placed a chair in the middle of the room, and Captain Poverdóvnya seated himself upon it, and cocked his elbows out, with his hands on his hips, in cavalry style.

Round about him stood the Commissioner of Police, Zakháriya, the Mayor and the Major.

Akhílla placed himself at Varnáva's very shoulder, and watched his every movement.

The teacher breathed hard, hesitated, shrank back, and first timidly dropped his eyes, then suddenly opened them very wide, and without stirring from the spot, twitched all over his body, as though some one were sliding over him with a sled up in the air.

Akhílla, in his good nature, encouraged him to the best of his ability, saying:

"But what are you so frightened about, you silly? Don't be afraid; he won't bite, so don't get timid."

And herewith, the deacon wet the tips of his fingers with saliva, compassionately put to rights with them the hair which had fallen into Varnáva's eyes, and added:

"Come now, seize him, with one swoop, by the moustache!"

Varnáva made a movement forward but trembled in the knees, and stepped back.

"Well, so you are a coward," said Akhílla. "You ought to consider, you silly, what you are afraid of. . . . It's ridiculous!"

Varnáva considered, and weakened worse than before. But Poverdóvnya sat there like a little god, and felt that he was "the soul of the company," and prepared a fresh surprise for the assembled guests.

"You are a coward, my dear fellow, a coward. A despicable coward, do you understand, the most *despicable of cowards*," Akhílla suggested, in the schoolmaster's ear.

"This is not nice, the guests are waiting," remarked the Major.

Prepótensky pondered, and pointing his finger at the Commissioner of Police, said:

"If you will permit me, I'd rather pull Vóin Vasílievitch's moustache."

"No, don't pull his, pull mine," insisted Poverdóvnya, and again assumed his serious air.

"Coward, coward!"—people began to whisper on all sides. Varnáva heard it, and the cold perspiration started out on his face, and cold chills ran all over his body. He felt intolerably ill, with the irritating illness of timidity, and in this timidity became positively terrible.

The first of all to notice this, was Akhílla who was keeping a close watch on him. On noting the keenly flashing eyes of the teacher, he nodded to the Commissioner of Police to go a little farther away, and simply took Zakháriya by the sleeve, and moving him back, said:

"Don't stand near him, father; don't you see, he's meditating."

Varnáva begins to advance. Now he takes a step, now the coward's trembling hand has moved, has separated itself from his side, and has begun to raise itself gently and slowly, not to the captain's moustache but uninterruptedly, straight at the face of the Commissioner of Police.

This steady impetus of Varnáva's hand toward the physiognomy of the Commissioner, made every one smile.

"The devil only knows, my dear people, what's acting inside him!" exclaimed Akhílla and turning to the Commissioner of Police, he once more shook his finger at him, as much as to say: "Stand aside, or the man will get confused, don't you see?"

But during this same brief moment, Prepótensky, screwing his eyes up tight, touched Poverdóvnya's moustache from afar off: the captain gave vent to a frightful roar at him, and suddenly barked at him like a dog. This was too much for Varnáva, who uttered a wild yell, and hurling himself like a panther on the Commissioner of Police, began, quite unconsciously, to thrash any person who came to hand.

This was a surprise which no one had anticipated, and

the effect was most complete. The overturned lamp, the flaming kerosene, the fleeing guests, the terror of the Commissioner of Police, and the howls of Varnáva, who had made good his escape into a corner from the phantom which pursued him,—all this rendered a prolongation of the feast impossible.

The Petersburg guest drove away, and Prepótsky, who was well acquainted with all the passages and cross-passages of the postmaster's dwelling, taking advantage of the moment when the people were departing, dashed along the corridor into the office, and there hid himself behind a cupboard.

CHAPTER IX

THE postmaster's wife, as she walked impatiently, in her dressing-gown, up and down her room, mentally searched for the principal person to blame in the terrible incident which had taken place. Who had concocted that jest?

"No, there's no jest about it," she reasoned: "but who was it that invited Prepótensky? But even that is not the point, who was it that introduced him to me? Who else but that wretched little husband of mine. . . . He comes up, 'Here now, I recommend to thee Varnáva Vasílievitch.' Well, just you wait: I'll give you Varnáva Vasílievitch! But where is that husband of mine, anyway?" she asked, looking about her. . . . "Can it be that he is asleep? Is it possible that he can sleep after what has happened! . . . Well, it's more than I can," decided the postmistress, and she impatiently ran out into the parlour, where according to his wont, the postmaster was supposed to be passing the night, having been driven from the conjugal chamber by domestic calculations. But, to the amazement of the house-mistress, her husband was not there.

"Ah, he is hiding from me; he's snoring now on the divan in the office. . . . Well, you won't snore long, I can tell you!" And the postmistress betook herself to the office.

The postmaster's wife was not entirely mistaken, her husband really was sleeping in the office, and the slight mistake on her side consisted merely in the fact that the postmaster was sleeping not on the divan, as she had assumed, but on the table. But on the divan slept Prepótensky, who was afraid to go home after all that had happened to him here, fearing lest Akhílla might be lying in wait for him round

some corner, and so he had persuaded the postmaster to allow him to pass the night there, for the sake of safety. The postmaster had assented to this all the more willingly because, perceiving that his wife was in a state of extreme irritation, he himself found it advantageous to have a strange man near him in the house, and therefore, he not only had not refused Varnáva shelter for the night, but he had even, like a courteous host, placed at his disposal the divan which stood in the corner of the office, and had stretched himself out on the large table where the letters were sorted, and had covered himself, clear up to his head, with the chancellery cloth which he had removed from the self-same table.

The door leading from the dwelling-rooms to the office where the postmaster and Prepótsky were sleeping was fastened. This still further enraged the energetic lady, for, according to the laws of the house, no door was ever to be locked against her control—the control of the mistress of the house,—and the postmistress considered herself as much the head of the house in the office, as in her own bedroom. And here, all of a sudden, was this unheard-of audacity! . . .

The postmistress fairly boiled with wrath. Once more she tried the door, but the door did not open, the hook rattled, but sat firmly in its socket, and meanwhile, through the door two breaths were audible! Two! The reader can imagine all the horror which clutched the heart of the wife at such an unexpected discovery!

Insulted in her rights as a wife, she rushed back along the corridor, and running into the kitchen, dashed to the table. For a long time in the dark she fumbled with her hands in a large box, in which swarmed a mass of black beetles, and at last found that of which she was in search.

It was a knife.

The tremendous interest awakened by this last line, makes us pause over it, in order to allow the reader to prepare himself to be the witness of a dreadful event.

CHAPTER X

THE very lively lady, armed with a large kitchen knife, directed her course straight for the door of the office, stripping up the right sleeve of her dressing-gown as she went, and once more applied her ear to the crack. . . . There could be no doubt about it that the unhappy pair were enjoying tranquil slumber, she could hear how one of them, the more powerful individual, was booming away like a gander, while the other, more delicate person, was a more drawling breath, like "pxhe."

The postmistress inserted the knife in the crack of the door, raised the hook, and the slightly-constructed little door, without the least difficulty squeaked softly and opened.

The dawn was still far distant, and nothing was visible in the room except the windows, which were only just faintly beginning to turn grey, but a practised eye could discern the table with the postal scales, and another long table in the corner and the divan.

Keeping to the left along the wall, the angry postmistress went straight to the divan, and groping with her hands in the dark, she found the snorer, without great difficulty, lying on the extreme edge, with his head hanging over a little, and performing at the full power of his nostrils. The sleeper heard nothing, and as the postmistress approached, he even snored with a certain enjoyment, as though he were conscious that there would speedily be an end to all that, that he would not enjoy that satisfaction again that day.

And so it turned out.

The sleeper had no sooner succeeded in performing the last ornate flourish, when the postmistress's left hand forcibly lifted him by the hair, and her right, flinging aside the knife, dealt an unbearable box on the ear.

"Mmm . . . but why!" began the awakened snorer, but in place of the answer, he received a second box on the ear, then a third, a fifth, a tenth, and each one more sonorous, each one more powerful and more stunning than the last.

CHAPTER XI

MADAME MORDOKANÁKI reached her home at about the same time that the crippled Varnáva Prepótsky was wending his way homeward.

The brisk drive along the firm, level road, had upon the Petersburg dame that agreeable, refreshing effect of which a person stands in need, after having spent a long time amid noise and chatter coupled with the imperative necessity of taking one's proper share in it all. Madame Mordokanáki did not laugh at what she had seen. She had simply got rid of her visit to the lower circles, and departed from them with the same spirit wherewith she stood god-mother for the house-keeper's child, when she had been asked to do so.

In this comfortable frame of mind she reached home, passed through a row of empty, sumptuous rooms, undressed, got into bed, and feeling slightly chilly, put out her hand for the plaid, which lay folded on a tabouret beside her couch.

To her surprise, as she unfolded this plaid, she noticed a piece of paper fastened to the middle of it with a pin. It was a thin sheet of note-paper folded in four.

The sleepy beauty looked more attentively at this supplement to her plaid, and in the middle of the strange borders executed along the edges of the sheet, she perceived the word "Parole d'Honneur" inscribed in large Russian letters.

"What can this mean?" she thought, and taking out the pin, she unfolded the sheet, and read: "Dear Madam! Excuse me, that I am so frank with you, but a military man is always frank. I am heartily glad, and I thank God, that you are going away to settle for the night your amiable children. God grant that they may attain to the same goal as their mamma. I respectfully beg that you will write an

answer. But if you think that Poverdóvnya has not merited your favour, then deign to send him your unearthly signature, which will be prized in my soul.

I say that you are not of earth,
You idol of my soul!
To you I show my spirit's worth,
In you is hid enchantment's whole.

CAPTAIN POVERDÓVNYA."

Madame Mordokanáki burst into hearty laughter, read the missive of the enamoured captain through once more, and putting out the paraffine candle with a silver extinguisher, fell sweetly asleep, saying to herself:

"Bon dieu! Voilà la véritable Russie!"

CHAPTER XII

ON that same day, when people in Stáry Górod were thus making merry, far away, in the little yellow chamber of the banished archpriest a scene of another sort was in progress. Natálya Nikoláevna lay dying there.

During the entire period of her stay with her husband in his exile, the archpriestess, prompted by her carefulness and economy, had dispensed with a servant, and had taken upon herself labours to which she was not accustomed, and which were beyond her strength. When she got down to the last twenty-five ruble note in her casket, she was frightened, lest they would soon be left without a farthing, and she made up her mind to ask their landlord, the gendarme, to wait for the rent for their quarters until they should receive their pardon. The gendarme agreed to do so, and Natálya Nikoláevna sedulously concealed the whole matter from her husband, and sought, in every possible way, to repay her landlord, in some manner. She dug potatoes with his servant-woman, she chopped cabbage and washed her own linen in the river.

Her age and her frail health did not permit of this, and she fell ill and took to her bed.

The archpriest condemned her strenuousness and her worry.

"You think that you are helping me," he said. "But when I found out what you were doing, you . . . redoubled my torture."

"Forgive me," whispered Natálya Nikoláevna.

"Why do you ask my forgiveness? Do you forgive me," replied the archpriest, and he took his wife's hand and kissed it with fervour. "I have worried you with my intractable temper, but if you wish . . . say but one word, and I will instantly go and make my submission, for your sake. . . ."

"What are thinking of! Never will I utter that word!

It is not my place to teach you, you know everything—what you are doing and why you are doing it!”

“I am enduring all this, dear, for my honour’s sake.”

The archpriest kissed his wife’s hand again, and went off to perform his duties as chanter, and Natálya Nikoláevna curled herself up in a ball, and went to sleep, and dreamed that deacon Akhílla came to her, and said: “Why don’t you pray that it may be easier for Father Savély to suffer?”— “But how?” asked Natálya Nikoláevna; “teach me how to word it.”—“Put it this way,” said Akhílla: “‘O Lord, save him by the way which Thou knowest!’” “O, Lord, save him by the way which Thou knowest!” said Natálya Nikoláevna devoutly, and suddenly seemed to feel the deacon take her up, and carry her into the sanctuary, and the sanctuary was large, immensely large, there were pillars—and one could see no end to them, and the altar reached to the very sky, and was all gleaming with brilliant flames, and behind them, where they had come from everything seemed tiny, so tiny that it would even have been absurd, had it not been for the agitation caused her by the fact that the deacon had carried her, a woman, into the sanctuary. “Are you in your right mind, deacon!” she said to Akhílla. “You will be deprived of your office for having taken a woman into the sanctuary.” But he replied: “You are not a woman, you are a *force*!” And then Akhílla, sanctuary and radiance vanished, and Natálya Nikoláevna was not asleep but was surprised that everything around her remained so small. The samovar, yonder, seemed to be not a samovar but a toy, and the teapot on the fire-pipe seemed like an egg-shell. . . .

At that moment Tuberózoff returned from the monastery, and made some affectionate remark, but Natálya Nikoláevna waved her hands at him.

“Be quiet,” she said, “be quiet. I shall die soon.”

The archpriest was astonished.

“What are you saying, Natásha, God forgive you!”

“Yes, I am dying, dear, I am dying, I am already half dead.”

"Who has told you that?"

"Why should any one have to tell me? I already see everything half its proper size."

The doctor came, felt her pulse, looked at her tongue, and said: "It is nothing serious,—merely a cold and fatigue."

Tuberózoff wanted to say that the sick woman saw everything half its size, but was ashamed to do it.

"It is an excellent thing that you did not tell him," Natálya Nikoláevna replied to his remark on this point.

"And do you still see everything that way?"

"Yes; for instance, that must be the moon yonder in the sky?"

"Yes, it is the moon peering in at us old folks through the window."

"And I see it the size of a fish's eye."

"That's your imagination, Natáša."

"No, Father Savély, it really is so."

Tuberózoff, desirous of convincing his wife, showed her the twenty-five ruble note which he took from the casket, and inquired:

"Come, tell me: what is this?"

"Twelve and a half," gently answered Natálya Nikoláevna.

Tuberózoff was frightened: what incomprehensible thing was this? But Natálya Nikoláevna smiled, took his hand, and closing her eyes, whispered:

"You are jesting, and I am jesting. I saw that note of ours very small . . . but now I shut my eyes everything grows big, very big. Everybody grows larger: you, and Nikolái Afanásievitch, the dear man, and little deacon Akhílla . . . and father Zakháriya. . . . It is delightful to me, delightful, don't wake me!"

And Natálya Nikoláevna sank into everlasting sleep.

PART FIVE

CHAPTER I

THE dwarf Nikolái Afanásievitch was not the only person who was struck by the terrible composure of countenance and the trembling head of Tuberózoff, as he walked through the deep mud of the unpaved streets behind the coffin of his dead wife, Natálya Nikoláevna. In the great and silent sorrow of a man with a deep nature, there is, indubitably, an irresistible force of all feelings which inspires fear, and causes horror in small natures, which are accustomed to pour out their grief in shrieks and groans. This was what was now felt by the people who had any connection with the afflicted old man, bereft of his faithful spouse. When the earth of the grave resounded on the cover of Natálya Nikoláevna's coffin, and the interdicted priest turned to go away from the high mound, all those who stood near recoiled, and stepping back, opened a lane for him down which he walked alone, with bared head, through the whole cemetery.

At the gate he halted, prayed before the holy picture in the chapel, and putting on his hat, looked back once more, and was amazed. Before him, a couple of paces distant, stood the dwarf, Nikolái Afanásievitch, who had followed him from the grave.

An expression of pleasure made its appearance on the arch-priest's serious countenance. Evidently, he was delighted at meeting his "old fairy-tale" at such a painful moment of his life, and as he turned aside towards the black fields, covered with the chilled and curling verdure of the winter wheat, he dropped from his eye a heavy tear—a single tear, and this, swiftly as a drop of quicksilver, hid itself in his grey beard, like an orphan in the forest.

The dwarf saw this tear, and comprehending its full significance, quietly signed himself with the cross. This tear relieved the bosom of Savély, which had become too narrow for the grief accumulated there. He exhaled a strong breath in front of him, and in reply to the dwarf's invitation to enter his britchka, answered:

"Yes, Nikoláša, I will get in."

They drove on in silence, and when the britchka stopped in front of the gendarme's cottage, in the monastery suburb, Tuberózoff silently pressed the dwarf's hand, and silently entered his quarters.

Nikolái Afanásievitch did not follow him, because he saw and understood Tuberózoff's desire to be alone. He did not call upon the widower until the evening, and after having sat for a while, he asked for tea, under the pretext that he was chilly, although his principal aim was an effort to divert Savély from his grief, and start a conversation with him about the object with which he, Nikolái Afanásievitch, had come. In this plan Nikolái Afanásievitch was entirely successful, and when Tuberózoff, having brought into the room the steaming samovar, began to collect cups from the cupboard, and prepare the tea, the dwarf began, from a distance quietly to lead up the conversation to the subject of what had been going on in the town, and he brought the story on, step by step, day by day, to that very hour when he was now sitting there in that miserable hut. In this narration, of course, the lamentation of the town over the archpriest's misfortunes figured largely; also the grief at his absence, and the fear that they might be deprived of him altogether.

The archpriest, who had listened to the beginning of this narration of Nikolái Afanásievitch in a serious composure which bordered on indifference, suddenly augmented his attention at the last part of the story, touching the relations to him of his parish, and when the dwarf, turning his eyes aside, and lowering his voice, began to tell how they had written and signed a communal petition, and how he, Nikolái Afanásievitch, had taken it from the hand of Akhílla and had

"hidden it in his bosom," the old man's under lip suddenly began to twitch convulsively, and he ejaculated:

"The people are kind, I thank them."

"Our people are kind, *bátiushka*,—even more than that, they are very kind, only, up to the present moment, they do not know how to set about this matter," replied the dwarf.

"Darkness, darkness over the abyss . . . but the Spirit of Cod is above all," said the archpriest, and sighing from the bottom of his heart, he asked for the paper in question.

"But what do you want with that paper, Father Archpriest?"—inquired the dwarf, with a crafty smile.— "It will be given tomorrow to the person to whom it is addressed."

"Give it to me . . . I want to look at it."

The dwarf began to unbutton his garment in order to get at the pouch which lay on his breast, but suddenly bethought himself, and stopped short.

"Give it to me, give it here!" entreated Savély.

"But you, . . . will not tear it up, *bátiushka*?"

"No," said Tuberózoff firmly, and when the dwarf drew forth and handed to him the sheets of paper, strewn with small and large, legible and obscure signatures, Savély reverently whispered:

"Tear it up . . . tear up this treasure! No! No! with it I will go to prison; with it I will go to the cross; with it you shall lay me in my coffin!"

And to the no small alarm of the dwarf, he began hastily to fold up this document, and placed it on his breast, under his under-cassock.

"Pardon me, *bátiushka*, I must deliver that."

"No, it is not necessary!"

Tuberózoff shook his head, and shaking his finger in negation, repeated:

"No, Nikóla, it is not necessary, it is not necessary."

And thereupon, he hid the petition still more decisively in his breast, and drawing close the belt of his under-cassock, hooked his collar closely.

There was now no possibility of taking that petition away

from him: one might have boldly answered for it, that he would sooner part with his life than with the sheet of these precious scrawls of "the community."

The dwarf perceived this, and without haste proceeded to chime in with Savély's mood. Nikolái Afanásievitch began to talk of the greatness and significance of this support on the part of the community, and then passed on to remark how sacred and inviolable for each individual the will of the community should be.

"They are weeping with grief, Father Archpriest, because they do not see you."

"Never mind, it cannot be avoided," sighed the archpriest. "I have not much longer to live; my days are numbered, and they are few."

"But how about me, Father Archpriest, how about me: what did the commune entrust to me, and with what am I to return to it?"

Tuberózoff left his seat, and after making the round, several times, of his tiny chamber, halted in the corner in front of the holy picture, drew the document from his breast, and having kissed it once more, restored it to the dwarf, with the words:

"You are right, my dear friend, do what the commune commanded you."

CHAPTER II

N IKOLÁI AFANÁSIEVITCH had a great deal of trouble in executing the commission entrusted to him, but he acted with zeal and persistency. That little envoy of a great commune did not grow cold or wax hot, but like a wood-tick, clamped himself tight to whatever person was necessary to him for the attainment of success, and did not let go. He visited Savély every evening, but said nothing to him about his activities of the day; and the other, of course, asked him no questions. In the meantime, the matter had progressed so far, that on the ninth day after the death of Natálya Nikoláevna, when the priest returned from the cemetery,¹ the dwarf said to him:

"Well, *bátiushka*, Father Archpriest, let us go home, sir: you are released."

"The Lord's will be done, concerning me," replied Tuberózoff indifferently.

"Only they demand one thing from you," continued the dwarf: "that you shall sign an agreement binding you not to do it again."

"Very well; I will not do it. . . . I will not do it, because—I am weak, and no longer good for anything."

"You will give that promise?"

"Yes, I agree. . . . I will."

"And before that, they request . . . that you will express your regret and ask forgiveness."

"For what?"

"For insolence. . . . That is to say, that is the way they put it, 'for insolence.'"

¹ It is customary to have a requiem service on the ninth day, after death, and again on the fortieth day. TRANSLATOR.

"For insolence? I never have been insolent, and have always restrained others from it, to the extent of my powers, and therefore I cannot repent of what I have not done."

"That is what they say, and what they call it."

"Tell them that I do not acknowledge that I have been overbold."

Tuberózoff halted, and raising his forefinger of his right hand on high, exclaimed:

"The prophet was not called insolent because, in his zeal, he was jealous for the Almighty. So tell them this: Your subordinate priest bids me say to you, that he is zealous, and will die, such as he was born, a zealot. And never speak another word to me about pardon."

The envoy went away with this decisive reply, and again drove, and walked, entreated, and prayed, and even threatened with the judgment of men and of God, but in vain did his weakening tongue toil, jarring, on.

The dwarf fell ill, and took to his bed; the invincibility of the case which this original advocate had undertaken, had broken both his strength and his patience.

The old men exchanged rôles, and as, up to that time, Nikolái Afanásievitch had daily visited Tuberózoff, so now, Savély, after having sawed his own wood, and been present at the evening service in the monastery, went to the big Plodomásoff mansion, where the ailing dwarf lay on a modest couch.

Savély felt unboundedly sorry for Nikolái Afanásievitch, and he grieved for him, and said, sighing:

"This is the last thing that was lacking to all that has happened—that you should have overworked yourself over me."

"*Bátiushka*, Father Archpriest, what is there to say about me, the old hare? What am I good for? No; do you please to grieve over yourself, and over your ecclesiastical chief; he begs you to submit, you know! Comfort him: ask forgiveness!"

"I cannot, Nikolái: I cannot."

"He implores you earnestly, Father Archpriest! You see, it is simply out of the official haughtiness of a superior that he

cannot speak of this, but he is very sorry for you, and it is very unpleasant for him that the whole town should have risen up on your behalf. . . . It is awkward, too, for him to refuse everybody, and so do you in your condescension, comfort him."

"I cannot, Nikolái, I cannot! Forgiveness is no light matter."

"Submit!"

"I am submissive to the authorities, but as for what concerns the authority above the earth, it has more power over me. . . . I am a man under the law. Sirach has impressed it upon us as a duty to be careful for the honour of our name, and Paul, who is the chief authority, protested against his rights of citizenship being trampled upon; I have no right to humiliate myself for the sake of the petition."

The dwarf was in despair. The inhibited priest afforded no hope of any concessions. As he held his ground, he neither advanced nor retreated, neither moved to the right nor to the left.

Nikolái Afanásievitch did not approve of Father Savély's attitude, and although he did not attribute his conduct to pride or anger, still he descried in him an unpraiseworthy stubbornness, and while condemning the archpriest, he made up his mind to say to him, once more:

"You know, *bátiushka*, Father Savély, you know you mustn't refuse to have compassion on the authorities, sir, for you must . . . you must allow them just a little revenge. How are they to get out of this affair?"

"Ah, that's their business."

"Well, that signifies, that you have no pity on them."

"O, no, my friend, I am very sorry for these pitiful authorities of ours!" replied the archpriest with a sigh.

"Well, then, act just a little after your usual manner; acknowledge that you are in the wrong."

"I cannot; the law does not permit."

The dwarf mentally determined to renounce all hope of accomplishing anything and began to make preparations to re-

turn to his town. Savély offered no opposition, but, on the contrary, even advised him to depart, and gave him no commands to say anything or make any reply there. Up to the last minute, when he was seeing the dwarf off from the town, beyond the barrier, he still did not yield an iota, and on returning to the town from the familiar road, he went and sawed wood in the monastery yard.

Nikolái Afanásievitch's grief knew no bounds or measure. He had never dreamed of returning as he had now been forced to do, and as he drove along, his thoughts kept circling about one and the same subject, and all of a sudden, his mind was illuminated by an idea,—a clear, simple, helpful, and brilliant idea,—one of the sort which are rarely sent down, and generally present themselves suddenly,—precisely as though they had descended from somewhere on high, and had not proceeded from ourselves.

After having travelled nine versts, the dwarf turned back to town, and presenting himself to Savély's superiors, he implored them to *command* the archpriest to submit.

As a matter of fact, the authorities had long felt anything but pleased at having tackled the stubborn old man, and the dwarf, having received what he desired, suddenly presented himself to Tuberózoff and said:

"Come now, my dear sir, proud Father Archpriest, you were not willing to yield to entreaty, so now you have put yourself in a position where you must show obedience to severity. I am ordered to say to you, that the authorities command you to ask forgiveness."

"And where do they command me to go down on my knees before them: here, or on the public square, or in the church?" inquired Tuberózoff drily.— "It is all one to me: I will do anything when I am commanded."

The dwarf replied, that no humiliation was exacted of him, and that it would be sufficient if he wrote the required appeal on paper.

Tuberózoff immediately sat down and wrote what was necessary to the proper person, marking the document: "The most

respectful petition which has been demanded." The dwarf remarked that the words "which has been demanded," were quite out of place here, but Savély rejected his suggestion with decision, and said:

"Well, I hope you are not ordered to instruct me in logic; I was taught that in the theological seminary. You told me what was demanded of me, and I am writing that 'which has been demanded.'"

The end of this, so far as Father Savély was concerned was, that having grown weary of bothering about him, he was set at liberty; but, on the other hand, as his most respectful petition had been, at the same time, "demanded," an endorsement was appended to it, by the terms of which, the obstinate old man was to remain for another half-year under inhibition, because of that "demanded."

Savély was not in the least disconcerted by this, and having thanked every one whom he considered it proper to thank, he drove off homeward with the dwarf, after his long and painful exile.

CHAPTER III

THEY talked very little on the way, and it was only Nikolái Afanásievitch who started any topics. In his effort to divert and entertain the archpriest, who sat beside him in silence, with his clasped hands, covered with old chamois-skin gloves, folded on his knee, he made remarks first on one thing, then on another, but Tuberózoff remained silent, or replied in the briefest possible words. The dwarf narrated how his parish had longed and wept for Tuberózoff, how the postmaster's wife, intending to beat her husband, had administered a thrashing to Prepótensky, how the schoolmaster had fled from the town, driven out by Madame Biziúkhin,—and still the old man remained silent.

Nikolái Afanásievitch spoke of Tuberózoff's little house, saying that it was decrepit, and needed repairs.

The archpriest sighed, and said:

"All that is dust and ashes to me henceforth, and I loathe myself for ever having been attached to it."

The dwarf touched upon the fact, that Akhílla still managed to find consolation, and being immeasurably bored, had taken into his house a blind puppy, which he had picked up under an overhanging bank, and was amusing himself with it.

"That is good for him, let him console himself," whispered the archpriest.

Nikolái Afanásievitch grew animated.

"Yes, sir," he began: "I must tell you, *bátiushka*, that the most wonderful things have happened to his character through that little dog. He has taught it, as he taught former dogs of his, to laugh; if it is told: 'laugh, doggie!' it shows its little teeth; but an idea occurred to him about naming it."

"Well, what difference does it make to the dog what it is called?" remarked the archpriest unwillingly.

The dwarf noticed that his fellow-traveller listened to the stories about Akhílla with less indifference, and proceeded:

"Yes, sir; well, and what do you think! With the character which the father deacon has, it does make a difference. What he has once taken into his head, just get it out if you can. 'I brought this dog home on a special occasion, when I was in a distracted state of mind,' he says, 'and I want to call it by a special name, such as no other dogs have, in memory of the event.'"

The archpriest smiled.

"Well, sir, and so he comes, does Father Akhílla, in that manner to me at Plodomásovo, on horseback, and sits on his horse in front of the windows of my room and my sister's and shouts, in a stentorian voice: 'Nikoláša! Hey there, Nikoláša!'—'O, Lord, what is that?' I said to myself. I thrust my head out of the hinged pane, and said: 'I hope nothing worse has happened to Father Savély, Father Deacon?'—'No,' said he, 'it's not that, but I have come to you, Nikoláša, on a very serious business. I have come to you for advice.'"

"'Please come into the house, then,' said I; 'you and I are not kazáks on guard that we should shout at each other, one from on horseback, and the other from a watchtower. So what are you about!' But he would not: 'I have no time,' said he, 'and, besides, I am not alone.'"

"'What is the business?' I shouted. 'Speak quickly, sir, for I am cold here in the window-pane, and I'm a man who is very sensitive to cold.' 'Well,' says he, 'you have lived in the houses of the gentry since early youth, and so you must know all the names for dogs.'— 'Why, how can one know all the names? There are lots of names for dogs, in various places.' 'Come,' he shouts, 'be quick, and run over the names!'— I mentioned several names, and told him that they were usually given according to the breed of the dog,—whatever was suitable. Greyhounds, I said, were generally called

'My Lord,' or by some of our simple names, which are prettier, like 'Barbos,' 'Fanny' for English hounds, 'Charlotka' for Kurland spaniels, while French dogs are called 'Joujou,' and 'Bijou,' Spanish 'Carlo' or 'Katania' or something of that sort; and German dogs 'Spitz.' . . . But here the father deacon interrupted me. 'No,' said he, 'do you tell me such a name as no one ever had before. You must know one of that sort!' he was pleased to insist.— 'How am I to calm him?' I said to myself."

"Well, and how did you do it?" inquired Tuberózoff with interest.

"Well, *bátiushka*, you see, I had begun to get quite frozen there in the window-pane by that time, and in order to get rid of him as quickly as possible, I said: 'Well, sir, I do know one name, only I am afraid to tell it to you.'— 'No, never mind,' he shouted, 'it's all right, tell me.'— 'One gentleman had a dog named *Kakvas*.'¹ But father Akhílla flared up suddenly.— 'What nonsense is that you're talking? Or have you gone out of your mind?'— 'No,' I said, 'I have not gone out of my mind, but I actually know that a certain prince in Moscow has a dog called *what's your name*.' Akhílla Andréyetch suddenly seemed to boil over with wrath, flew into a passion, and began to spur on his horse, and gallop up to the wall, and shout: 'Is it possible, you shameless old man, that you can say that to me? Don't you know that my name is a Christian name, and that I am a servitor of the Church?' I had the greatest difficulty, *bátiushka*, in soothing him, and explaining to him what *Kakvas* meant. Well, and then, to make up, he fairly leaped for joy on his horse, and drawing a puppy from the breast of his short, fur-lined coat, he shouted: 'How are you, *Kakvásinka*!' and dashed joyfully home."

"A grown-up child," commented Savély, with a smile.

"Yes, sir, everything is a joke to him."

"Do not condemn him: let the child comfort himself with

¹ The first two words of the sentence: *Kak vas nazyváiut*?—"What's your name?" TRANSLATOR.

whatever he likes, so long as he does not cry. He has a heavy burden to bear,—a life like a sleepy dream,—when in his one person a thousand lives are blazing.”

“Precisely, sir. I don’t know how he is going to die.”

“That is what I do not know myself,” jested the archpriest: “he is the very negation of death. Well, and what happened to this *What’s your name?*”

“Just what you might suppose,—so far, it is unfortunate, and it could not be otherwise. What sort of habits has the father deacon permitted himself to invent? Just as soon as he gets greatly bored with your absence he takes his ‘What’s your name’ in his hands, and rides to the posting-station, seats himself on the porch and waits. As soon as some important traveller or lady halts there, he immediately says: ‘Laugh, doggie!’ and the little beast laughs, and the traveller gets curious; and he asks: ‘*Bátiushka*, what is that dog’s name?’ And he replies: ‘I’m not a *bátiushka*, but a deacon. My *bátiushka* (priest) has been devoured by the dogs.’ And they ask him: ‘Well, and what is the name of that dog of yours?’— ‘The dog’s name is *What’s your name*,’ he replies. And he instigates perpetual quarrels about that, and he keeps saying: ‘I’m going to call them all dogs constantly, to their faces, now, and even the justice of the peace himself can’t make me stop it.’ And he does all that, Father Savély, to avenge you, but how he expects to avenge you,—he does not consider. And something unpleasant happened to Father Zakháriya on account of him: the ecclesiastical district superintendent saw that little dog at his house, and asked its name; and Father Zakháriya said: ‘Its name is *What’s your name*, your Reverence.’ And he received a reprimand.”

Savély laughed until he cried, and wiping away the tears with his handkerchief, he said:

“That simple-souled Zakháriya is priceless. He is a vessel of the Lord, and another such prayerful man I have never beheld. I long to embrace him.”

In front of the travellers, their home town suddenly revealed itself to them from the hill-top,—an ancient town, full

of character, and full for Tuberózoff of memories, beneath whose instantaneous oppression the old man sank back and screwed up his eyes, as though dazzled by the brilliancy of the clear sunlight.

They ordered the coachman to drive more slowly, so that they might not arrive while it was light, and in the twilight they knocked at the iron ring of the familiar gate. A shout rang out: "Who's there?" It was Akhílla's voice. Tuberózoff wiped away a tear with his finger, and crossed himself.

"Who's there?" Akhílla inquired again.

"Who should it be but I and Father Savély?"—replied the dwarf.

The deacon emitted a squeal, flew down all the steps of the porch at one leap, flung the gate wide open, and himself rolled, in a ball, into the britchka, and clasping the archpriest round the neck, hung there speechless.

The two, as they embraced each other in the britchka, sobbed long and piteously while the dwarf, as he stood on the ground, wept softly but gratefully behind his chilly hand.

At last the deacon, having recovered from his sobbing, tried to speak. He came very near inquiring after Natálya Nikoláevna; but catching himself up in time, he adroitly changed his remark, and pointing out to the archpriest the little dog which was frolicking about his feet, he said:

"And here, Father, is my new puppy, *What's your name!* He's the most wonderful dog. And if we wish, he will laugh for us immediately. What's the use of being bored over a trifle!"

"*Over a trifle!*" Father Savély was on the point of repeating, with intolerable pain in his heart, but he controlled himself, and merely squeezed Akhílla's hand firmly, and with all his might.

CHAPTER IV

ON entering his house, where, for a rather long time, deacon Akhilla had been the master and the sole occupant, the archpriest kissed the elemental giant on the cold parting of his curly head, and as he made the tour of the rooms in his company, he made the sign of the cross over Natálya Nikoláevna's little, empty bed, and said:

"Well, my friend, it is not worth while now for you and me to part,—we will live together!"

"Very good indeed. I am delighted and ready, and even assumed myself that it would be that way," replied Akhilla, and again he threw both arms round the archpriest.

And so they remained and dwelt together. Akhilla served in the church, and looked after the housekeeping, while Tuberózoff sat at home, read John Bunyan, meditated and prayed.

He rarely showed himself outside the house, or, to speak more accurately, he did not show himself at all, and in reply to the questions of the people who came to call on him, as to why he did not go out, he said briefly:

"Why . . . I'm . . . preparing myself."

He really was *preparing himself* and lived the intensified and concentrated life of one who is putting his spirit to the test, verifying it.

Akhilla shielded him from every care and anxiety, and this afforded the old man a more convenient opportunity to *prepare himself*.

But this felicity was not fated to last long. An honour awaited Akhilla; the Bishop took him with him to Petersburg, when he was summoned to serve his turn on the Synod. The proto-deacon of the provincial capital was ill.

The parting between the deacon and Tuberózoff was touch-

ing, and Akhilla, who had never written any letters, and did not know how letters are written or despatched, not only offered to write to Father Tuberózoff, but kept his promise.

His letters were original, and peculiar, no less than the whole cast of his thought and his life. First of all, he sent Tuberózoff a letter from the Government capital, and in that letter, placed in an envelope upon which was written: "To Father Archpriest Tuberózoff, secretly, and to be delivered into his own hands," he informed him, that while he was living in the monastery, he had avenged himself, on his behalf, upon the Censor, Troádiy, by tying to the back of his cat a sausage with the inscription: "I'm carrying this sausage to my master," and setting the cat to run about the monastery by night with this inscription.

A month later, Akhilla wrote from Moscow how much that town pleased him, but that the people there were very crafty, and especially the choir-singers, who had twice invited him to drink lampopó with them, but that he, "knowing from experience, what that lampopó signified, had only been amazed at such insolence on the part of the singers."

A little later still, he wrote from St. Petersburg: "My greatly-beloved friend, and your Right Reverence, Father Savély. All hail. I am living splendidly in a *podvórye*, which is a sort of little monastery, but it's frightful what a lot of temptations there are, because it's exactly as though it were in the middle of a noisy city. But I miss you, nevertheless, in spite of this uproar, for if we were only here together, it would be much jollier to wonder at everything together. I remember your blessed counsels, and keep myself in constant respect towards every one, of which you have an indication in that Moscow lampopó, which I would not drink. I drink only the least little bit, and that chiefly because I am afraid that if I don't drink at all, I shall lose good acquaintances. There is a great deal here that is good, but there are no genuine deacons, such as are required with us; they are all mere tenors, fit only, as is thought among us, for service at cemeteries, or something of that sort, and although some of them

even have a great conceit of themselves, yet they are all pretty thin in comparison with us, and during the service, they all use a speaking tone, and not infrequently even they are out of tune, so that it is impossible for the choir to come in on the pitch with them properly. But I, who am an expert in that matter, do not imitate their fashion, but serve in my own way, and consequently, although I am only a new arrival, the Guild of Merchants invited me to the Bazaar, to celebrate a Prayer-service in a tent near the gates, and in addition to the money gift, they presented me, for that service, with three silk handkerchiefs, such as you like, and I shall bring them to you as a fairing. To your health! I am bothered also, not a little, by my lack of culture, and also because I am far away from everywhere. They serve coffee here chiefly at entertainments. But owing to our being so far away, I go visiting very little, because all the places are out of the main streets; for I travel in the roof-seats of the stages, and one can never go out of the beaten track on them, but you will not understand that, because of your provincialness: you sit exactly as though on a house, on a very high roof, and if you get down from there, you have to be very agile indeed, to jump down when it is going at full speed, and it is even forbidden to persons of the feminine sex, on account of their clothing. And the drozhky-drivers here, are, according to my observation, a very derisive lot, and if one of us ecclesiastics undertakes to hire them, but offers a very cheap price, they immediately shout out, one after the other, 'You've made a mistake, *bátiushka*, in hiring him; he tipped a priest out into a puddle yesterday,' and so I don't hire them at all. One day I encountered our Varnávka, but I didn't touch him, because he and I were riding on roof-seats of stages going in the opposite directions, and all I managed to do was to threaten him with my fist; but, anyway, he has become a very dead-like sort of fellow here. As for your unhappiness, that you are still inhibited, and cannot pray for yourself at the Liturgy yet, don't get downhearted, for I have thought that all out and have made

up for it, in the most natural manner, and the Almighty sees it. Put it this way—that although you cannot pray for yourself in that country church, yet you have a man in the capital through whom prayer is made for you both from the Kazán Cathedral, where the saviour of his country, the Most Illustrious Prince Kutúzoff is buried, and from the Cathedral of St. Isaac, which is all marble on the outside, from the bottom to the very top, and that that man of prayer for you in the capital is I, for as I read the litany, I proclaim aloud the names of those for whom petition is appointed, but I utter thy name to myself in a whisper, ‘my friend, Father Savély,’ and send up thence the most earnest prayer for thee to the Eternal, and I make complaint about your being insulted, without cause, before all the people, by the authorities. And you must be so good as not to think to yourself, and not to say, that ‘my days are numbered’ for that will be very sorrowful to me and Father Zakháriya when it happens, and I give you my word of honour, we probably shall not long survive you.”

Then followed the signature, “The temporary substitute at the Capital for the proto-deacon of his Diocese, Deacon Akhílla Desnítzin, of the District Cathedral of Stáry Górod.”

Still another letter was received from Akhílla, in which he wrote, that “by a happy accident, he had encountered Prepótensky, and had had a mind to fight with him because of the past, but it had turned out in an entirely different way, so that he had even been to see him at his editorial office, for Varnáva was now an editor, and Akhílla had seen at his rooms divers ‘literary men,’ and had there effected a sincere reconciliation with Varnáva. The cause which led to this reconciliation was stated to be, that (according to Akhílla’s words),’ Varnáva had become an atrociously unhappy man, because he had recently married a young lady of those parts, who was the very severest lady ever known, and always condemning marriage, and not infrequently beat Varnáva, so people said, and now he was quite a different sort of person: he himself confided to me, that if he were

not afraid of his wife, he would even be willing to stand up for God in his newspaper, and he heaped curses on Madame Biziúkhin, and especially on Termosésoff, who had settled himself magnificently, and had been receiving a huge salary for secret service in watching honest folks, but the devil has led him astray with greed: he took to putting counterfeit money in circulation, and had now landed in prison." Most of all did Akhílla boast of having seen how performances are given in the theatre. "Once," (he explained), he had gone with the choir-singers, in civilian garb, to the very top gallery at the Opera, to see "A Life for the Tzar" and had cried all night long afterwards with rapture over the beautiful harmony of the voices; "and on another occasion, again disguised in civilian garb, I went to see how King Achilles was represented. Only, he wasn't the least bit like me; an actor sprang out all dressed in armour, and complained of his heel, but if you were to give me that harness, I would play the part much louder. But the rest of the acting was all in heathenish style, and they were uncovered to the last degree, and disturbing for a man to see alone or with another man."

And then came the third and last letter, in which Akhílla announced that he would soon return home, and after that still, on a grey, gloomy evening, he presented himself suddenly before Tuberózoff, like a messenger of joy.

As soon as Father Savély had exchanged greetings with the deacon, he flew out into the street, to close his shutters, so that the joyful return of Akhílla might be concealed from curious eyes.

They had a very long talk. While that conversation was in progress, Akhílla drank up a whole samovár and Father Tuberózoff kept pouring out fresh cups of tea for him, saying the while:

"Drink, my dear friend, take some more," and when Akhílla had drunk his fill, he said to him, "And now, brother, tell me more; what more did you see and learn there?"

And Akhílla told his story. God knows what all he nar-

rated: it was all variegated patchwork, huge and incoherent, but that which most of all amazed Father Savély in his tales was the fact that Akhílla, most unmercifully besprinkled his speech, appropriately and inappropriately, with the strangest possible words, such as he not only had not used before his journey to Petersburg, but, in all probability, had not even known!

Thus, for example, àpropos of nothing at all, he began:

"Just imagine, dear friend, Father Savély, what a combination" (with a ruthless emphasis on the *i*).

Or:

"When he said that to me, I said to him, 'Well, there's no *vous perdu*, that's sugar du-du, my dear fellow!'"

Although Father Tuberózoff listened with interest to Akhílla's stories, still, on hearing the frequent repetitions of such words, he frowned, and, at last, losing patience, he said to him:

"Why do you do that? Why have you learned to stick in such empty words?"

But Akhílla, who was entirely carried away by his subject, was so eagerly engaged in pouring out before Father Savély the entire treasure of his borrowings from the capital, that he did not pick his words.

"But dear Father Savély, you must not be afraid,—there's no harm in a word now-a-days—they don't inhibit you for that."

"What, my dear fellow, *no harm*? it's bad to listen to."

"O-o! that's because you aren't used to it. But no matter what you say to me now, it's all fiddle-faddle."

"Well, there you go again."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, you just said another nasty word."

"Fiddle-faddle, you mean?"

"Whew, how loathsome!"

"How so, sir? . . . all the literary people use it."

"Well, and they have books in their hands: let them sit there with their 'fiddle-faddle,' but why should you and I

borrow their fiddle-faddle when our Russian word 'nonsense' is quite sufficient for us?"

"Perfectly correct," agreed Akhílla, and after reflecting, he added, that he really liked nonsense much better than fiddle-faddle.

"Good gracious," he added, contradicting himself, "when you get off that word nonsense, people laugh at you on the spot, but they fiddle-faddle there, for instance that there is no God, or some other folly of that sort, so that at first you find it terrible, or you dispute it."

"It ought always to be terrible," whispered Tuberózoff softly.

"Well, but you see, Father Savély, you can't be so severe. What if they prove that there's nowhere to escape?"

"What do they prove? What do you mean by that? What are you saying? What have they proved to you? Surely not that there is no God?"

"That's what they did prove, Father. . . ."

"What lies are you telling now, Akhílla! you are a good man and a Christian . . . cross yourself! What have you said?"

"But what am I to do? You see, my dear friend, that is not pleasant for me, but you can't kick against the *kvakt*." ¹

"What is *kvakt*? Is that a fact which you have discovered?"

"Why, that, Father Savély . . . why should I agitate you? You read your Bunyan, and believe, in your simplicity, as people have hitherto believed."

"Let my Bunyan alone, and don't worry about my simplicity, but consider what you are saying against yourself."

"But what can one do? there's the *kvakt*," replied Akhílla, with a sigh. Tuberózoff, seriously disturbed, rose from his seat, and demanded that Akhílla should unreservedly and immediately disclose to him the fact, from which doubts as to the existence of God could be derived.

"That *kvakt* jumps over every man," replied the deacon, and

¹ A mispronunciation of *fact*. TRANSLATOR.

explained that kvakt meant a flea, and that anybody could make a flea from sawdust, and, consequently, could create everything all by himself.

On receiving this sincere and simple-minded confession, Tuberózoff actually could not make up his mind at once what to answer; but Akhílla, having begun to express himself in this direction, went further, and proceeded to set forth the whole extent of the enlightenment he had acquired in Petersburg.

"And, really now," said he, "if we proceed further from that very insignificant flea, then nothing of all that is visible to us, for we have neither the proper books, nor the globes, nor telescopes, nor anything else. The gloom of ignorance is so great, that I will even say to you, that they have not the boldness here to reason much! But there, you know, I sat with the literary men,—I sat for half an hour, and I saw that religion, as it now is, does not exist, but that the flea is a positive kvakt. So, according to science, it turns out. . . ."

Tuberózoff merely looked at him, and blinking his eyes, inquired:

"But what have you been serving up to the present time?"

The deacon, not in the least abashed, and pointing with his hand at his belly, replied:

"Why, the same thing that everybody serves, Mammon. Science has demonstrated what man lives for—to eat; he wants to be gorged, and not to feel hungry. And if we did not want to eat, we should do nothing. That is called the *struggle for existence*" (and the deacon mispronounced struggle). "If it were not for that, there would be nothing."

"But here you see," replied Tuberózoff, "that God, who does not need anything, created the world."

"That is true," responded the deacon. "God did make that."

"Then how is it that you reject Him?"

"Why, I don't exactly reject Him," replied Akhílla, "all I say is, that, proceeding from the kvakt to reasoning, as the flea can be made from sawdust, so the whole universe might have

appeared of its own accord. They have a god, they say, 'oxygen.' But I don't know what the devil oxygen is! And so you see: when you begin to talk in various directions, I don't know anything again."

"Where did that oxygen of yours come from?"

"I don't know, by heaven, I don't . . . and we'd better drop that, Father Savély."

"No, that cannot be left in you, my dear friend! Tell me—whence came the beginning of that oxygen of yours?"

"By heaven, I don't know, Father Savély! But yes, do drop that, my dear soul!"

"Perhaps that oxygen had no beginning?"

"The deuce knows! Well, to the devil with it!"

"And it has no end?"

"Father Savély! . . . come, to the pigs with that oxygen. Let it be without beginning and without end, if you like: what does that matter to us?"

"But can you understand how it exists without beginning or end?"

Akhílla replied that he could.

And then he continued loudly:

"There is one God worshipped in the Holy Trinity, and He is eternal, that is to say, He hath neither beginning nor end to His existence, but always hath been, is, and always will be."

"Amen!" said Father Savély with a smile, and rising from his seat, with the same smile, he took Akhílla by the hand, in friendly wise, and said:

"Come with me, and I will show you something."

"Certainly," replied the deacon.

And linking arms, they went out of the house, crossed the whole yard, and walked into the middle of the vegetable-garden, which was glittering with snow. Here the old man came to a halt, and pointing out to the deacon the cross on the cathedral where both of them had so long served at the altar, he silently turned his finger downward to the earth, and said with severity:

"Kneel down at once, and pray."

Akhílla dropped on his knees.

"Recite: 'O God! Cleanse thou me, a sinner,'" said Savély, and having uttered it, himself made the first reverence to the very ground.

Akhílla sighed, and followed his example. In the solemn silence of the midnight hour, in the white, deserted garden illuminated by the moon, one after the other began, in measured time, his repeated reverences of his burning brow against the cold snow, and great sighs poured forth with the sweet cry of the prayer: "O, God, cleanse thou me, a sinner, and have mercy upon me," which the voice of the priest accompanied with another prayer: "O God, enter not into judgment with Thy servant!" The preacher and the penitent prayed together.

For a long time Akhílla's sighs were wafted over Stáry Górod: he, the consoler and amuser, whose cantatas and merry halloos every one here had accepted with a smile,—he, himself, having sinned, had now become a suppliant, and he prayed for himself and for the whole world, that the righteous wrath which is justly stirred up against us might be turned aside.

O, what a difference there was now between that Akhílla, and the Akhílla of long ago, who had swum, whistling, in the early dawn, across the river, on his handsome stallion!

That Akhílla had made his appearance like a fresh morning after nocturnal rain, but this one glimmers dimly like a sunset after a stormy day.

Old Tuberózoff, with shaking head, sat, in his grey under-cassock, on the porch of the bath-house, all the while Akhílla was praying, and counted off his reverences. When he had reckoned up as many as he deemed necessary, he rose, took the deacon by the arm, and they returned peacefully to the house, but the deacon, before he got into bed, approached father Savély, and said:

"Do you know, father, while I was praying . . ."

"Well?"

"It seemed to me that the earth quaked."

"Blessed be the Lord, that He gave you such a prayer! Lie

down now in peace, and sleep," replied the archpriest, and they peacefully fell asleep.

But when Akhílla awoke the next morning, he felt that, in some way or other, he had got out of himself: as though he had unconsciously thrown something away, and had found something else. He had found something which was heavy to bear, but which, nevertheless, he did not desire to part with.

This was a flood of gracious waves of faith in his agitated and trembling soul.

His soul had had to sicken and die, in order that it might rise again, and this sacred work had been accomplished.

The unwise Akhílla had become wise: he sought silence, and when he had grown strong, after the expiration of several days, he asked Savély:

"Instruct me, thou grand old man: how am I to reform myself, if it be the will of God that I shall be left alone, even for a little space? I was proud of my strength, but I have learned my lesson, and I shall trust in it no more. . . ."

"Yes, you have been strong and mighty, and the hour is coming for thee, when thou shalt not gird thyself, but another shall gird thee," replied Savély.

"And my mind is still less to be trusted than my strength, because, you know, I have always been confused in my reasoning."

"Trust to your heart, it beats faithfully."

"But what shall I say, in case a word is needed? For my heart is speechless, you know."

"Listen to it, and whatever groans within it, speak of that, and cast out into the refuse dirt those who jump fleas at you!"

Akhílla clutched at his heart with his hand, and went away, saying to himself: "I don't know how all this will be." But an unaccountable foreboding told him very clearly, that soon, very soon, he would be alone, and that all his strength would forsake him, "and another would gird him."

CHAPTER V

AKHÍLLA'S dark and painful forebodings did not deceive him: old Tuberózoff, frail and broken by what he had gone through, was already no longer of this world. He caught cold on the night he counted the reverences made by the deacon at his behest, and fell ill—not painfully ill, but so radically that immediately he stood on the brink of the grave.

Feeling that death was taking him into its embrace, the archpriest grieved over one thing only,—that the term of his inhibition had not yet expired. Akhílla understood this, and comprehended wherein lay the principal sorrow.

Tuberózoff did not wish to die under discipline,—he wished to present himself before the heavenly Power absolved by the earthly powers. He dictated to Akhílla a letter, wherein he informed his superiors of his ailing condition, and touchingly implored that they would be indulgent toward him, and shorten the appointed term of his inhibition. This letter was despatched, but no answer to it was received.

Father Tuberózoff maintained silence, but Akhílla listened to the voice of his heart, and leaving the chanter Pavliukhán with the sick old man, he hired a pair of posting-horses, and drove to the government capital, without any permission whatsoever.

He did not waste many words in explanation, but handed over to the proper person all the money he could command, and pitifully entreated that this person would procure for Father Tuberózoff immediate absolution. But his efforts were not crowned with success: on this occasion the authorities showed that they were in full possession of that which we are so fond of denying to them. They showed that they pos-

sessed character, and decided that everything which had been appointed for Tuberózoff must be accomplished, just as everything decided by the highest courts must be carried out.

Again Akhílla was on the point of experiencing an access of rage, but he curbed this transport, and returned home with a swiftness equal to that which he had exercised in going to the government capital, and did not say a single word to Tuberózoff; but the old man both understood the cause of his departure and read in his eyes the answer which he had brought back.

Pressing the deacon's hand with his hand, which was already growing cold, Savély said:

"Do not grieve, my friend."

"No, of course I am not grieving," replied Akhílla.— "As though you had not served before the Lord plenty in your lifetime!"

"I thank Him . . . He has revealed to me His mind and reason, and has given me to behold His works," said the old man, and, with a sigh, he closed his eyes.

Akhílla bent down close to the dying man's face, and descried an aged tear on his dark eyelids.

"But this is not right, Father," he said, in a friendly tone, to Tuberózoff.

"Wh . . . a . . . at?" uttered the old man dully.

"Why are you dissatisfied with people?"

"You did not understand, my friend," the sick man whispered feebly, as he pressed Akhílla's hand.

The dwarf Nikolái Afanásievitch galloped to the government town again, in Akhílla's stead, and galloped with a decisive word:

"As soon as I get a hearing I'll be off, but I will not go away," he said, "without satisfaction. Yes, sir; I am seventy years of age, and they cannot shut me up anywhere; I am a cripple and a monster!"

The deacon saw him off, and remained with the sick man himself.

All his force and strength, and everything which Akhílla

could account precious and dear to him, he would gladly have given, to alleviate this grief of Tuberózzoff's, but all this was out of his power, and all was already too late: the Angel of Death was standing by the bedside, ready to receive the parting soul.

A few days later Akhílla, sobbing in the corner of the bedroom, watched Father Zakháriya bending over Tuberózzoff's pillow, and receiving in his ear his last, his dying confession. But what does this mean? . . . What sin is there on the conscience of the aged Savély, that makes Father Benefáktóff suddenly become so agitated? He even seems to have forgotten that he is celebrating a sacrament which permits of no witnesses, and demands, aloud, that Father Savély should forgive some one for something! What renders him so inexorable by the coffin of Savély?

"Be peaceable! be peaceable! forgive!" insisted Zakháriya, gently but firmly. "If you do not forgive, I will not absolve you. . . ."

Poor Akhílla shuddered, and, with sinking heart, listened eagerly to every word.

"I implore you, by the living God, while you are yet alive . . ." exclaimed Zakháriya loudly, and paused, without finishing his sentence.

The dying man raised himself up convulsively, and again fell back, then stretched out his hand, so that he could make the sign of the cross upon himself with it, and as he blessed himself, he ejaculated, with great effort, and with breaks between his words:

"As a Christian, I . . . forgive them for having insulted me in the presence of every one, but as for observing the dead letter of the law . . . they are . . . ruining the living work of God here. . . ."

The solemnity of the moment grew more tense: Father Savély rattled in his throat, and he went on, as though in delirium:

"I shall lay . . . that grief . . . before the throne of the King of Kings . . . and I will myself . . . bear witness. . . ."

"Be reconciled: forgive! forgive them everything!" exclaimed Zakháriya, wringing his hands.

Savély knit his brows together, sighed, and whispered, "It was good for me, that Thou didst humble me," and then, unexpectedly, in a loud voice, he finished:

"Enlighten the ignorant according to the judgment of those that love Thy name, and forgive this blind and perverse generation for its hardness of heart."

Zakháriya, with a smile of spiritual bliss, cast a glance heavenward, and made the sign of the cross over Savély's face.

That face no longer moved, the eyes gazed upward and became extinguished: Tuberózoff was dying.

Akhílla, trembling, rushed to him with a wild cry, and fell, sobbing, on his breast.

The departing man, with his last effort, raised his hand to Akhílla's head, and thereupon, a loud little bell began to sound in his throat, mingling with the murmur of the words of the quiet parting prayers, which Zakháriya was reading through his tears.

Archpriest Tuberózoff had finished his existence.

CHAPTER VI

S AVÉLY'S death produced a terrific impression on Akhílla. He moaned and wept not like a man, but like a nervous woman who is bewailing a loss, which it seems to her impossible to bear. Moreover, the death of Archpriest Tuberózoff was a great event, for the whole town also: there was not a house where they did not pray for the dead man.

In the house of the departed, one crowd followed another: some came to pay a last reverence to the honest man in his coffin, others, in order to see how the priest looked in his coffin. On the night after the death of Father Savély, the dwarf Nikolái Afanásievitch brought the absolution of the deceased from his inhibition, and Savély was laid in his coffin clad in his full vestments of his office: broad and long, in his velvet *kamilávka* of honour. Requiem services were celebrated uninterruptedly in his house. No sooner did some priest arrive, out of zeal, and don the cassock which lay on the folding lectern, in order to chant a requiem, than Deacon Akhílla immediately asked his blessing, on his stole, and serving with him, prayed assiduously.

On the second day, the coffin was ready, and, in accordance with an ancient, local custom, which has been preserved among us down to the present time in certain places, when a priest is laid in his coffin, a solemn and terrible ceremony began. The clergy who had assembled, bearing tapers, in mourning vestments, carried the dead Savély on their arms thrice around the huge coffin, and Akhílla held in his dead hand a smoking censer, and the dead man seemed himself to be censuring his own cold casket. Then they laid the dead priest in the coffin, and

all dispersed, except Akhílla; he remained there alone all night with his dead friend, and something happened there which Akhílla did not notice, but which others noticed for him.

CHAPTER VII

THE deacon had not lain down to sleep since Savély's death, and the three sleepless nights, coupled with the strained attention which he had incessantly bestowed upon the dead man, had brought Akhílla's steel nerves to a state of extreme excitement.

The instincts and passions by which he was chiefly inclined to be guided, were silent, and in their place spiritual conditions hitherto not natural to him had sprung to light, and had indicated themselves in sharp outlines.

His eternal frivolity and scatter-brainedness had made way for heavy, importunate thought, and profound absorption in himself. Akhílla's face had not paled, neither had his eyes grown dim,—on the contrary, his swarthy skin was lighted up with a dull rose-colour. He saw everything with a clearness which made his eyes ache; he heard every sound as plainly as though the sound had rung out within himself, and he understood many things of which, hitherto, he had not even thought.

He now understood everything which the dead Savély had wished him to understand, and concerning which the dead man had worried, and he called the dead man a martyr.

After remaining three nights alone with the departed, the deacon found no difficulty in conversing with the corpse, and expected an answer from beneath the brocade sacramental Veil, which covered the face of the dead.

"*Bátotchka!*" the deacon called softly, interrupting the reading of the Gospel, and approaching, in the nocturnal stillness, the dead man outstretched before him: "Arise! Won't you? . . . Arise, just before me alone! You cannot, you lie like the grass."

And for several minutes Akhílla sat or stood in silence, and again began his monotonous reading.

On the third and last night Akhílla dozed for a very brief moment, waked up an hour before midnight took the place of the reader, and fastened the door behind him.

Having put on his dalmatic, he took his stand at the folding lectern, and touching the shoulder of the corpse, he said:

“Listen, dear Father, to what I am now going to read to you for the last time,”—and thereupon, the deacon began the Gospel according to John. He read four chapters, and when he reached the fifth chapter, he paused on one verse, and sighing, twice repeated the promise: “for the hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. . . .”

Having repeated this twice with his voice, Akhílla began mentally to repeat this passage several times, and went no further.

It is not a difficult matter to perform the reading over the dead; people who have even the very slightest experience in this matter execute it without the least agitation; nevertheless, in this matter, as in any other, certain practical rules must be observed if it is to pass off well. One of these rules is, that the reader while reading, must not look at the face of the corpse. Tradition asserts that this disturbs his repose; the experience of those readers who have disregarded this rule, asserts that an unpleasant glimmer comes into the eyes; the composure which is so indispensable in the solitude of the night, fails the reader, and his eyes begin to take note of a gentle barely visible gleam, at first not far away, and surrounding the book itself, then further away, and stronger, and then one must exert one's power over oneself to break up the beginning of hallucination, or it will develop and give rise to irresistible terror.

Akhílla now did not, in the least, regard this rule; on the contrary, he even regretted that the dead man's face was wrapped in the brocade sacramental Veil; but in spite of all

this, nothing resembling terror disturbed the deacon. As has been stated above, he paused on one verse, and said to himself:

"Assuredly, he has already heard by now the voice of the Son of God, and lives. . . . It is only that I do not see him, but he is here."

And absorbed in these meditations, the deacon did not notice that the night had passed, and that the dawn was gleaming in the sky with a pale-amber streak, the last dawn which would cast its light upon the wasted remains of him who had been priest Savély,—the man who had listened to the voice of his land, and had understood it.

When he beheld that dawn, the deacon sighed, and stepping away from the lectern to the coffin, he leaned both elbows on its walls, so that Savély's high-arched breast came just under his own breast, and cautiously lifting, with two fingers, the brocade Veil which covered the dead man's face, he said:

"Father, dear father, where is thy soul now? Where is thy fiery speech? Cast a little of thy spirit over me, the slow of mind!"

And Akhílla fell upon the breast of the dead man, and suddenly began to shudder, and sprang back; it seemed to him that something had coursed through his whole being. He glanced around him on all sides: everything was still, only his eyelids, rendered heavy by weeping, stuck together, and a longing to sleep drew his head away somewhere, it seemed.

The deacon shook himself, made a low reverence touching his brow to the floor, and was startled at the sound he made: he seemed to hear something knocking over his head, and he imagined that Savély was sitting up, with his head covered with the brocade Veil, and holding the Book of the Gospels, which had been placed in his dead hands.

Akhílla did not grow frightened, was not agitated, and moving slowly away from the coffin, he rose to his knees. And what happened? In proportion as the bowed Akhílla rose up, the dead man, in the same degree, before his very eyes, laid himself down slowly in the coffin, without support-

ing himself by his hands, which were occupied with the cross and the Gospels.

Akhilla sprang to his feet, and waving his hand, he whispered:

"Peace be unto thee! Peace! I am disquieting thee!"

And with that word, he was on the point of taking the Gospels again, and continuing his reading, but, to his amazement, the book was closed, and he could not remember where he had stopped.

Akhilla opened the volume at random, and read, "He was in the world, and the world knew him not. . . ."

"What is it I am seeking?" he thought, with clouded brain, and opened the book unconsciously in another place. And here stood written, "And they shall look on him whom they have pierced."

But just at the moment when Akhilla was about to turn over the leaf, he noticed that he was extremely oppressed, and that some one was pulling him by the hands.

"But what do I want? What is it that I am seeking? . . . What is the appointed Selection? What day is it?"—reflected Akhilla, and could by no means comprehend why he was being carried away from there. . . .

In the brightly-illuminated temple, at the altar, in light, festival vestments, and with his tall violet-velvet *kamilávka* on his head, stood Savély, and in a rotund, enormous voice, emitting each word like a sphere, he was reading:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

"O Lord, what is this! And I had thought that Father Savély was dead. I have slept through the feast of faith. . . . I have missed the Holy Matins."

Akhilla opened his eyes, and perceived that he really had been asleep, and that day had come; the red flame of the funeral tapers was vanishing in the rays of the rising sun; the room was stuffy from the candle-smoke, and through the air was wafted the mournful ringing of the church bells, and some one was knocking at the door of the room.

Akhílla hastily passed his thin hand across his face, and opened the door.

"Did you fall asleep?" Benefáktoff asked him gently, as he entered.

"I fell into a doze," replied the deacon, making way for the clergy who entered behind Father Zakháriya.

"And I . . . you know . . . I have not slept: I have been composing my funeral address all night long," Benefáktoff whispered to the deacon.

"And have you composed it?"

"No; nothing comes of it."

"Well, that is the way it usually is."

"But do you know what—you might say something perhaps?"

"Stop, Father Zakháriya; as though I were a learned man!"

"Well—you wear the dalmatic . . . you have the right."

"But what matters the right, Father Zakhariya, when I have neither the gift nor the knowledge?"

"Do you set to work, my good sir, and pray as assiduously as you can for the gift, and it will come," interposed the dwarf in a whisper.

"Pray! No, friend Nikolásha, you had better pray for me, for I have lost my senses through grief. I even see visions when I am wide awake."

"Very well, I will pray," replied the dwarf.

CHAPTER VIII

ALL Stáry Górod escorted the body of Tuberózoff to the church. The mass and the funeral service, thanks to Akhílla, produced a frightful impression; whenever the deacon tried to speak, he choked, paused, and was drowned in tears. His sobs, wafted over the throng, communicated to every one profound affliction. Only during the time of the funeral oration, delivered by one of the priests, did Akhílla repress his woe, and as he listened, he wept softly into his handkerchief; but, on the other hand, when he emerged from the church, and beheld those places where, for so many years he had walked with Tuberózoff, who was now being borne along shut in his coffin, Akhílla felt an irresistible impulse not only to sob, but to shriek and wail. In order to give vent to these cries which were tearing their way out of his soul, he sang "O Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us," but sang with such force, that a blind, centenarian old woman, who had brought out her grandchildren to the gate as the sad procession approached, in order that they might salute the coffin, suddenly clasped her hands, and falling on her knees, exclaimed.

"Okh, He hears it, the Lord hears it—how Akhílla shouts to the very heavens!"

But now here is the place of repose, encircled by a trench, and planted round about with willows,—the cemetery, where Tuberózoff was fond of taking frequent strolls, in the evenings, and to whose orderliness he had carefully attended. The coffin has been borne under the cross-beam of the dark, wooden gates; the last hymns have been sung, and the strips of coarse, white linen, rolling across the mound of earth on the brink, stretched across the dark jaws of the grave. In another second

the last "amen" will ring out, and the body will be lowered into the grave.

But before this could take place, something was destined to occur which no one had expected. Akhílla, who had furnished many surprises in his life, felt an irresistible impulse to astonish the Stárgorodians once more, and, at the same time, to astonish them in an entirely different way. Pale, and death-like, he stretched out his hand to one of the gravediggers who held the linen, and turning his appealing eyes on the clergy, he exclaimed:

"Fathers! I implore you . . . order them to wait a little while. . . . I will make only the very briefest sort of speech."

The sobbing Zakháriya immediately stopped the gravediggers, and stretching out both hands towards the deacon, he blessed him.

All bathed in tears, Akhílla mopped his brow, all covered with red spots, with his cotton handkerchief, and convulsively stammered out, with trembling lips, "He was in the world, and the world knew him not" . . . and suddenly, finding no other appropriate words, the deacon flushed scarlet, and as though he were catching with his eyes sounds traced for him in the air, he cried menacingly: "But they shall look on him whom they have pierced," and thereupon, he flung a handful of earth on the coffin, hastily took off his dalmatic, and left the cemetery.

"You spoke magnificently, sir, Father Deacon!" whispered the dwarf through his tears.

"Lo, the spirit of Savély was in him," replied Zakháriya, as he removed his vestments.

CHAPTER IX

TWO things remained for Akhílla to accomplish after the funeral of Tuberózzoff: in the first place, to submit himself to this—that “another should gird him,” and, in the second place, to die, although, in the words of Father Savély, he was “a living negation of death.” He directly and hastily set about bringing both the one and the other close to him. When he had freed himself from the anxieties over the funeral dinner, Akhílla stretched himself out on his felt, in the unfloored lumber-room behind the cottage, and did not rise from it.

One day passed,—two, three days passed—and still Akhílla lay there and did not show himself. Father Tuberózzoff’s house looked exactly like a dead house: the brilliant sun rose and illuminated its deserted yard—it was death-like; a layer of cloud would come up and be reflected in the panes of his windows, precisely like shadows from beyond the tomb—and again nothing stirred.

As the neighbours watched this stillness, they began to complain that it made them feel eerie; but still the deacon did not show himself. It became a matter of doubt as to what ailed him?

Zakháriya went to visit him. For a long time the gentle old man wandered from room to room, and called:

“Deacon, where are you? Listen, deacon!”

But the deacon did not respond to his call. At last, Father Zakháriya opened the door, a crack, into the dark little store-room.

“Why do you knock so loudly, Father Zakháriya,” replied Akhílla, from somewhere in the gloom.

“Why do you ask, my dear fellow? Where are you now?”

"Open the door wider: here I am, in the corner."

Benefáktóff did as Akhílla told him, and perceived him lying on a plank bed, nailed to the wall. The deacon wore a plain shirt of coarse linen, with a straight, turned-over collar, bound about, in Little Russian style, with a long, variegated braid, and full, ticking trousers.

"What are you doing here, deacon?" Father Benefáktóff asked him, as he sought a place to sit down.

"Permit me, I will move," Akhílla, rolling over on the board nearest the wall.

"What ails you, deacon?"

"Yes, a nice deacon I am to you. . . ."

"But what are you then?"

"Stricken," replied Akhílla.

"But how are you stricken?"

"It's ridiculous of you to ask, Father Zakháriya: 'how?' I'm stricken by that. I'm stricken by the death of the arch-priest."

"Yes, but what is to be done? Death, you know . . . of course . . . it is hostile . . . to all nature, and a bar to all thought . . . but it is inevitable . . . inevitable . . ."

"Well, and I'm stricken by that bar."

"But you . . . come, you . . . must take courage . . . 'tis a sin . . . for the will . . . the decree of . . ."

"Come, and what if I am stricken by that decree?"

"But why are you loaded up with that 'stricken, stricken'? That is . . . not good, my dear fellow."

"But what good is there left? Nothing!"

"Well, and if you yourself understand that there is very little good, then you must be reasonable: you cannot escape from the law of nature, brother!"

"Why, what 'law of nature' are you talking about, Father Zakháriya? Come now, what if I am stricken by a law of nature?"

"Well, and what are you going to do with it now?"

"Hush! Ahk, my Heavenly King! Don't bother me with your laws, please, Father Zakháriya! I will do nothing!"

"But is it possible that you mean to lie there all the time now?"

The deacon was silent for a space, but then, with a sigh, he began, softly:

"I am still mourning greatly, but you have begun to talk to me all at once. What business is it that you want to talk to me about?"

"Why, get well as quickly as you can, that's what I want, for even when we are in grief we must eat and drink, out of weakness."

"And what is there to say about that? We will eat and drink because there is a reason for it."

"What do you mean? What reason?"

"This reason, that, of course, we shall now begin to forget, little by little, what has happened, and are we suddenly to find that we have forgotten him altogether?"

"But how can that be helped?"

"This—that I, with my character, don't, in the least, consent to forget him."

"That is so, brother; but the time will come when you will forget."

"Father Zakháriya! Please don't say that to me, because you know how fierce I am when I am vexed."

"There you go again, brother, restrain yourself from rough behaviour."

"O yes, restrain yourself, forsooth! And who will now restrain me from anything?"

"Why, if you like, I will."

"Enough of that, Father Zakháriya!"

"What do you mean? Of course I will restrain you!"

"Stop that, please!"

"But why should I stop it?"

"Because; because there's no use in telling lies: you can't restrain me from anything."

"Well, deacon, you are simply impudent," replied Father Zakháriya, taking offence.

"But I'm not in the least impudent, because I love you also;

but how can you restrain me, when you have so weak a character, that even chanter Sergyéi is insolent to you?"

"Insolent to me! Every one is insolent to me! And you needn't use any more such stupid arguments."

"Well then, restrain me now from arguing like that."

"I won't restrain you, no . . . I won't, I won't, because I came to visit you, and you have shown yourself an impertinent person. . . ." Good-bye!"

"But please, Father Zakháriya! I didn't mean it in that way at all. . . ."

"No, no; go away: you have pained me."

"Well, God be with you. . . ."

"Yes, you are an insolent fellow, and a very insolent fellow, at that."

And Zakháriya went away, leaving the deacon, in the hope that perhaps he might get tired of lying there, and would come out into the light of day of his own accord; but another whole week elapsed, and Akhílla did not make his appearance.

"They will forget," he kept repeating to himself, "they will, infallibly, forget him completely, all of them!" and this thought engrossed him incessantly, and he fell to considering, in the most powerful fashion, how that affliction might be remedied.

A special event was needed to draw Akhílla out of his lair.

On awaking one morning, about six o'clock, just as Akhílla saw the rays of the rising sun penetrating through the narrow window over the door, of his lumber-room Father Zakháriya suddenly ran in, in a great hurry, and announced that a new archpriest had been appointed to them, in the place of Tuberózoff.

Akhílla turned pale with vexation.

"Aren't you glad of it, pray?" inquired Zakháriya.

"What business of mine is it?"

"Why isn't it your business? Why don't you ask who is appointed?"

"Well, and what difference does it make to me?"

"A graduate of the Academy!"

"A graduate of the Academy—you don't say so! So that's what you're so delighted about! Yes, by heaven, you are still earthly-minded, Father Zakháriya."

"What do you mean by 'earthly-minded'? A graduate of the Academy means that he is a clever man."

"There you go again, 'clever'! Let him be clever if he likes: are you and I likely to get any the wiser for that?"

"What's that?—So you don't respect the learned clergy?"

"But isn't it all one to him, whether I respect him or don't respect him? That's nothing to him, and possibly I am thinking of something more important."

"Oh what? Permit me to ask—of what?"

"Of our late archpriest."

"There you are impudent again!"

"I'm not in the least impudent; you are thinking how to welcome the new man, while I am thinking how to avoid forgetting the old one. What impudence do you find in that?"

"Well, after this, it's not worth while to talk to you," said Zakháriya with decision, and went off in displeasure, but Akhílla immediately rose, washed, and betook himself to the Commissioner of Police, with the request that the latter would help him to sell, as speedily as possible, both his house and his pair of Kabardei race-horses.

"What for?" asked Porókhontzeff.

"Don't be curious," replied Akhílla, "only afterwards, when I have done it, you shall see everything."

"You might, at least, say, what manner of thing it is."

"It's that manner of thing, in order to prevent people from soon forgetting Father Savély—that's what manner of thing it is."

"Let Father Zakháriya commemorate him in the words of the church more frequently."

"What can Father Zakháriya commemorate? No, now-a-days he's very fond of science, while I love the man, in the old way."

The conference stopped at this point, and in accordance with Akhílla's wish, his property was sold.

It remained to be seen what he would do now.

The deacon received two hundred rubles for all that had belonged to him; he thrust the two bank-notes into the pocket of his nankeen under-cassock, and announced that he was going to the government capital. He had already cut himself a travelling-staff from a thin oaken beam, tied up a small bundle, bought in the bazaar two big turnovers with onion stuffing, and thrust them into the same pocket where his money lay; and was entirely ready to set forth on his campaign, when the new archpriest, Irodión Gratziánsky, arrived. He was a fine-looking man, of uncertain age. From his outward appearance one might, with equal probability, have assigned him twenty-six years, or forty.

Akhílla went up to his new superior, and having accepted his blessing, was about to kiss his hand, but when the latter withdrew his hand, and proposed that they kiss after the fashion of friends, Akhílla kissed him.

"You see what a kind man he is!" said Zakháriya to the deacon, an hour later, as he was seeing him off.

"On what grounds do you so promptly make up your mind as to his good qualities, Father Zakháriya?" Akhílla replied indifferently.

"Why not? He did not even permit you to kiss his hand, and a kiss on the mouth . . . means kindness."

"In my opinion, it is nothing more than the most empty form," replied Akhílla.

He was now frightfully jealous of the new archpriest in Savély's place, and picked flaws in him, trying to find everything about him bad, in order that he might not, in any way, compare him with the departed Tuberózoff. The more the new Archpriest pleased all the Stárgorodians, the more obdurately did Akhílla try to hate him.

CHAPTER X

ON the following day, the new archpriest celebrated the Liturgy, and made an address in which he lavished praises on his predecessor, and said that it was indispensable, and an obligation incumbent on them, that they should remember and hold in respect his merits.

Akhílla and Zakháriya listened to this sermon from the sanctuary, laying their ears against the curtain of the Holy Door. Akhílla was disturbed, because the new archpriest talked just as Tuberózoff had talked, and the congregation listened to him with no less attention than they had listened to Tuberózoff . . . and, in conclusion, because he defended Tuberózoff, and exhorted the people to value him, and remember his services.

"Why is that? Why does he do that?" the deacon said indignantly, as he left the church with Zakháriya.

He already bitterly hated the new archpriest, for his success in his sermon, and raged against him like a jealous woman. He was conscious of his own injustice, but was unable to control himself, and when Zakháriya, undertaking to shame him, said that Gratzíánsky had been noble in all his acts, Akhílla impatiently broke in two the stick which he held in his hand, and remarked:

"That's precisely what is repulsive to me, sir!"

"Why, do you mean to say that it would have been better if he had been worse?"

"It would, it would . . . of course it would have been better!" interrupted Akhílla impatiently.—"Don't you know that the man who has not sinned never repents?"

Zakháriya merely waved his hand in despair.

Akhílla's trip to the government capital was postponed from

one day to another; the deacon was present at the verification of the contents of the vestment-room, the books and the church funds, and all this he did in silence, raging at God knows what. To his grief, there was no one with whom he could pick a quarrel. But now Gratziánsky began to say that it was indispensable that a small monument should be erected over Tuberózoff's grave.

Akhílla gave a tremendous start.

"Why must he have a 'small' monument, and not a large one? He lived among us for the greater part of his life, and left us more of his services than anybody else."

Gratziánsky looked at Akhílla with displeasure, and without making any reply, proposed a subscription to erect a monument to Savély.

The subscription brought in thirty-two rubles.

The deacon would not subscribe anything, and abruptly refused to put down his name.

"Why? Why will you not?" Benefáctoff asked him.

"Because it is vain," replied Akhílla.

"But wherein do you see vainness?" interposed Gratzíánsky drily.

"But how can a monument be erected to a man of this world with thirty-two rubles? Such a monument is comparable to a two-kopék pistol. No, sir; excuse me from this insult to him; I will not subscribe."

In the evening, Father Zakháriya, as he was taking his customary stroll, dropped in to see Akhílla, and said to him:

"Look out for yourself, deacon . . . you are rather setting the archpriest against you."

"What? . . . Get out! Akh, tell me, please, plainly. What's the matter; how am I setting him against me?"

"By disrespect, disrespect and insubordination, that's how, you would not agree to the monument, and you went away without kissing his hand."

"Why, he does not want me to kiss his hand, does he?"

"He does not want you to do it at home, but at service. . . . It's quite another matter at the service, my dear fellow. . . ."

Akh! you perplex me with that archpriest of yours! It's one way here, and another way there: I shall not be able to remember all your regulations so long as I live, and I had better stick to one rule."

The deacon went to the new archpriest, to ask his permission to go to the government capital for a couple of weeks, and kissed his hand by force, saying:

"You must excuse me, but I shall get mixed up otherwise."

And so here was Akhílla at liberty, on the journey for which he had so impatiently fitted himself out with aims of the most grandiose character: while he was still lying in his lumber-room, he had thought of erecting a monument to Father Tuberózoff long before any one else thought of it, but not one worth thirty rubles, but one that should cost all the money he owned, one that should cost the two hundred rubles which his entire property had yielded,—the property he had acquired by the labours of his whole life. Akhílla regarded that sum as entirely adequate for erecting a monument which should be the marvel of all times and peoples, a monument so vast that his ideal plan could not find room even in his own head.

CHAPTER XI

THE October night was cold and gloomy; clouds drifted swiftly across the sky, and the wind rattled the bare branches of the willows along the roadside. Akhilla walked steadfastly on, without pausing, and when the autumnal dawn gleamed grey, he had already traversed half the way, and might venture to indulge himself with a rest.

He turned aside from the road to a place where a great quantity of straw had been swept together, lay down behind it to protect himself from the wind, covered his head with the skirt of his coat, and fell asleep.

The day was like the night: the cold sun now peeped forth, and again curtained itself with clouds; the wind now raged and howled, and again it hissed along the ground like a serpent. The skirt of his coat which the deacon had wrapped around his head had long since been wrenched away from it, and was flapping in the wind, while the sun, leaping out from behind a cloud, shone straight into his countenance of the heroic mould of the legendary epic heroes.

The day had already got warmed up, and in the trampled stubble-field where Akhilla lay, with his head thrust into the straw, the last, belated inhabitants of the dead grain-field made their appearance, a hard, black-skinned beetle crawled up on Akhilla's boot; and over his beard, hardly able to move and trembling, climbed a half-frozen bumble-bee. The poor insect, finding both warmth and a shelter in the deacon's thick beard began to move about, and woke him up: Akhilla snorted loudly, stretched himself, sprang to his feet, threw his bundle over his shoulder, and after drinking two kopéks' worth of kvas at the posting-house, proceeded on his way to the town.

Before twilight he had put the remaining thirty-five versts behind him, and on catching sight of the crosses on the town churches, he sat down on the embankment of the roadside ditch, and for the first time since his start, thought of eating; he drew forth the turnovers which had now lain in his pocket for more than a week, and putting them one against the other, by the lower crusts, he began to devour them with double appetite, but nevertheless, he did not eat all of them, and thrusting the remnants into the same pocket as before, he set out for the town. He passed the night with some seminary students of his acquaintance, and early on the morning of the following day, he went to Tugánoff's, ordered the servant to announce him, and sat down on the coffer-bench in the anteroom.

One hour passed—then another, and Akhílla was not summoned. He had already more than once asked the page-boy who frequently ran past him:

"Well, major-domo, when am I going to be called?"

But the major-domo did not even consider it necessary to answer the peasant-appearing deacon in the dusty nankeen cassock.

Not having, as yet, got properly rested from his tramp of the preceding day, Akhílla began to doze, but as dozing was now inappropriate for him, he thought he would divert himself with eating, which the bits of the turnovers undevoured the day before rendered perfectly possible. But no sooner had he extracted the remains of the cakes from the pocket of his under-cassock, and started to blow off the dirt which had stuck to them; when he suddenly sat petrified, and then sprang to his feet, and without being announced, he rushed through the luxurious rooms of the house to which he was a stranger. By accident, he hit directly upon the study of the Marshal of Nobility, and encountering him face to face, he cried:

"O ye fathers! Whoever believes in God, let him help me! Just look what a misfortune has happened to me!"

"Why, what is the matter with you?" inquired the astonished Tugánoff.

"Parmén Semyónitch! What have I done, wretch that I am!" shrieked Akhilla, quite beside himself with horror.

"Why, have you murdered any one, pray?"

"No; I have run to you on foot, in order that you might give me some good advice, because I want to erect a monument to the Archpriest, to cost two hundred rubles."

"Well, what then? Has any one taken the money away from you?"

"No, no one has taken it—but there's something worse happened."

"Have you lost it?"

"No, I have eaten it!"

And Akhilla, in despair, raised to the eyes of Tugánoff the lower crust of the half-eaten turnovers, to which, as though baked in with them, clung fast the corner of one one-hundred ruble note which had escaped.

Tugánoff touched that corner with his delicate nails, and freeing it from the crust, he perceived that underneath it, and stuck still more tightly and dried in, was another, similar scrap of a bank-note.

The Marshal could not refrain, and burst out laughing.

"Yes; here, as you see, I have eaten them all," reiterated the deacon, in his confusion biting at the nail of his middle finger, and then, suddenly wheeling about, he said, "Well, sir; I beg pardon for having disturbed you—farewell!"

Tugánoff came to his rescue.

"Have done, my dear fellow, with falling into despair," said he. "All this is of no consequence; they will change your notes at the bank for me, so do you take some other notes from me, and build your monument to priest Savély; I loved him."

And thereupon, he gave Akhilla two new hundred-ruble bills, and put away the remains of his meal to be added to the family collection of curiosities.

This misfortune was repaired, but another began; it was necessary to design a monument such as he wanted, but Akhilla could not manage it at all.

He submitted this calamity to the opinion of Tugánoff.

"I want, Parmén Semyénitch," he said, "that the monument for my money should be as firm and spacious as possible."

"Order a pyramid of granite."

Tugánoff had them bring him a portfolio from the cupboard, and drawing thence a picture of an Egyptian pyramid, he said:

"Here—such a pyramid as this!"

This idea pleased Akhílla immensely, but he had his doubts whether he had enough money to carry it out? He was told, in reply, that if two hundred rubles were insufficient, Tugánoff, who cherished great respect for old Tuberózoff, desired to pay the entire deficiency himself.

"But you," he said, "shall be the builder, and you are to build according to your judgment, whatever you wish!"

"Why, this is. . . ." Akhílla began, disconcerted, but in place of further words, he went down on his knees and touched his brow to the floor in a ground-reverence, and unexpectedly seizing Tugánoff's hand, he kissed it.

Tugánoff was affected; he called Akhílla, "a good man," and offered him lodgings in the upper story of his house.

Akhílla immediately removed from his seminary friends to the mansion of the Marshal of Nobility, and began to busy himself about ordering the stone. First of all, he tried to be extremely cautious.

"Why not?" he said to himself, "for it actually is a fact, that wherever I go, I leave a trail of disorders behind me."

And he prayed to God, that now, at any rate, just for once, He would deliver him from all wild impulses, and vouchsafe that he might carry out the affair he had undertaken in a thoroughly serious manner.

CHAPTER XII

THE deacon made the round of all the well-known monument-dealers in the town, and settled upon the worst of the lot, on a Russian mill-stone maker, a certain Popýgin. Two German monument-makers had enraged the deacon, by insisting on knowing "whether the scale permitted" of building so large a pyramid as he had ordered from them, measuring off the dimensions simply by paces, and the height by elevating his hand.

Popygin, the mill-stone maker understood him better. He measured everything by paces and criss-cross fathoms.¹ They made a verbal agreement, and struck hands on the bargain, and the pyramid was ordered, and executed. Akhílla watched them move, turn and polish the huge stones, and was in raptures at their huge size.

"There, that's better than any 'scale,' " said he, "as we wish, so we build it."

The Russian master Popýgin upheld him in this.

Tugánoff listened to Akhílla's reports as to the progress of the work, and did not dispute with him about anything, did not oppose him on any point. In this way he comforted the epic hero of a deacon with the monument, as one comforts a child in distress with a plaything.

At the end of a week, the pyramid and the inscription were quite ready, and the deacon came to beg Tugánoff to take a look at the splendid product of his creative fancy. It was an extremely broad, squat pyramid, with a cross on top, and huge, gilded wooden Cherubim at the corners.

Tugánoff surveyed the monument and said, "It will do,"

¹ This curious measure is from the big toe of one foot (leg out stretched) to the tip of the index-finger of the hand (arm outstretched) on the opposite side. TRANSLATOR.

and the deacon was simply in ecstasies. The pyramid was taken apart, and conveyed in that shape, on nine sledges, to Stáry Górod. On a tenth sledge, behind the train, rode Akhílla himself, squatting on his heels, in a greasy sheep-skin coat, between the four gilded wooden Cherubim wrapped in linden-bast matting. He was in transports over the magnificence of his monument, but a certain feeling of uneasiness was intermingled with his transports: he was afraid some one might criticize his pyramid, which for him was the sacred product of his brain, taste, devotion and love for the dead Savély.

In order to avoid criticism, Akhílla decided to complete the sumptuous erection as secretly as possible, and on arriving in Stáry Górod, he presented himself only to Father Zakháriya, by night, and related to him all the difficulties which he had overcome in the execution of the pyramid.

But Akhílla did not succeed in putting the monument together in secret. The parts of Savély's pyramid dispersed on the sledges became the object of universal attention on the following morning. The knots of citizens who assembled were particularly interested by the arms and wings of the golden Cherubim, which gleamed forth from the matting; these simple folk disputed hotly, and could not decide as to the nature of those Cherubim: whether they were silver, or gilded.

"They are silver and gilded, and with brilliants nailed into them in the middle," Akhílla explained to them, at the same time thrusting aside his fellow-citizens who were thronging round the men engaged in putting the pyramid together.

The citizens of the highest spheres also annoyed Akhílla. These, so it seemed to him, even came directly and expressly, with the malicious object of criticizing.

"That is—well, I simply don't know what to call it! Everything, everything, everything about it is bad. Ah, good heavens! How can they grieve a man so? Well, if it doesn't please you, if it's bad—then endure it, hold your tongue, make allowances. . . . I certainly have done my best . . . Fie! What a nasty lot men are!"

And Akhílla, who was neither conceited nor greedy of praise, being kept in a state of constant irritation, reached a point where he became unendurable; he could not bear to hear a single word about Tuberózoff. Even praises of the dead man drove him into a rage: he thought they might be dispensed with.

"Why praise him!" he said to Benefáktoff. . . . "You are a giddy-pate, Father Zakhariya,—if you don't mind my saying so; you recall him, as one recalls the milk in the tracks of a cow."

"But do I say anything bad about him, pray?"

"It is not necessary to say anything at all about him; this is no time for disputing about firm believers."

"How censorious you are! So you mean that he must not be praised?"

"But why praise him? He's not a gipsy horse, that he should need praise."

"You are a thoroughly, thoroughly uncouth man," said Zakháriya, "you used to be a great deal nicer."

With others Akhílla was even sharper than with Benefáktoff, and when every one, having recognized the fact that Akhílla was irritable, began to avoid him, he got one thought firmly rivetted in his mind about the vanity of all things earthly, and about death.

"I don't care what any one may say," he argued, "but 'tis no light thing, sir, suddenly to take and die, and find yourself in an entirely different place, God only knows where."

"But 'tis early for you to be thinking of that; you're not going to die soon," Zakháriya comforted him.

"Why do you foresee that, Father Zakháriya?"

"From your build . . . and you have such strong . . . ears."

"Yes, if you go by my build and my ears of course, I'm never going to die, and you'd have to kill me with a hammer; but that . . . you know, depends also on one's fancy, and therefore a man is bound to think of it."

And, at last, the deacon really fell into the most oppressive state of melancholy, so that people began to notice it, and say that he was inviting death.

From that time forth, the little chamber in the archpriest's house (which he had bequeathed in his will for a school) where the philosophizing Akhílla sought shelter for the time being, became for some people an object of sympathetic or curious attention, and for others,—a place of mysterious terror.

Archpriest Gratzíánsky, on visiting the deacon, reproached him for his voluntary exile, and tried to persuade him that such estrangement from people was not wise, but Akhílla replied with composure:

"It is too late to think of wisdom, *he is buried.*"

To doctor Pugóvkin to whom the deacon had once administered a ducking, and who had remained his friend, notwithstanding, also came to comfort him, and assured him that he was ill, and ought to take a course of treatment.

Akhílla said:

"You speak the truth, my friend; I'm scattered all over with all my thoughts . . . I meditate—I don't know what about, and everything, you know . . . tortures me," (Akhílla contracted his brows in a frown, and wound up in a whisper), "'tis anguish!"

"Well, yes, you have a very exalted sensibility."

"What did you call it?"

"You have a very exalted sensibility."

"That's it exactly—sensibility! Everything oppresses me, you know, and I feel as though there were a stake in my breast, and at night I sit for long periods, and don't know what I am grieving and weeping about."

Tuberózoff's spiritual daughter, landed proprietress Alexándra Serbóloff, came to visit him. Akhílla was delighted to see her. His visitor asked him:

"What is this illness which has taken hold of you, Father Deacon? What has happened to you?"

"Exalted sensibility has happened to me, madam. I have done nothing but grieve and weep since the father archpriest's death."

"You have exalted feelings, Father Deacon," replied the lady.

"Yes . . . my breast is oppressed, and it seems to me all the time that there is nothing more to live for."

"Where did you get that idea that you need live no longer?"

"Why, three sisters have come to me—dejection, grief, and sorrow,—and they have revealed everything to me. Farewell, dear madam, I value your visit greatly."

And the deacon showed her out, as he showed the door to every one else, and remained alone with his "three sisters," and his exalted sensibility.

But all of a sudden, an event occurred, in consequence of which Akhílla was much shaken: this event was the death of the dwarf Nikolái Afanásievitch, who prescribed in his will that Father Zakháriya and Akhílla were to perform his burial service, and for that he bequeathed to each of them five rubles, and a couple of pairs of socks, as well as a cotton nightcap of his knitting.

On his return from the dwarf's funeral, the deacon not only seemed to grow cheerful, but he even got into a joking mood.

"You see, my dear brothers, how *she* has begun to gather in our gang, one after another," said he; "now there's Nikolái Afanásievitch dead; and soon it will be the turn of Father Zakhariya and myself."

And Akhílla was not mistaken. When he was awaiting the encounter with her—*she* was already standing, merciful and irresistible, behind him, and overshadowing him with her cool wing.

Our chronicle must carefully preserve the last acts of the epic hero Akhílla—acts entirely worthy of him, and which aided him to make the passage to the other side of the sea of life in a manner suited to his own taste.

CHAPTER XIII

STÁRY GÓROD had waked up to activity, in view of the approach of spring: the river was preparing to open, was turning blue and swelling; on both banks piles of linden-bast matting sacks sprang up, and broad barks were being put in order. Throngs of tattered peasants, in linden-bast slippers and white felt caps, reached the town every day from the villages which had been starving through the winter. They begged for jobs as boatmen¹ for just money enough to cover their taxes, and for their bread, and were very happy if they were hired to raft to distant regions that very grain which they lacked at home. But not all of them, of course, attained to this happiness. The supply of labour greatly exceeded the demand for it. No one considered himself bound to bother himself about these superfluous men; it was a different matter, so far as those who got jobs was concerned; they were taken care of. They were admitted to food at the superintendents', who drove the starving men away from the kettle, when they had eaten the proper quantity. Starving men cannot be allowed to eat to satiety; these "greedies" as they are called, overeat themselves, "do not empty their crops" and die of gluttony. The doctor opened the bodies, and seeking for poison, found nothing but buckwheat porridge; the stomach was distended to an impossible degree, stuffed tight with porridge; the gullet was stuffed with porridge, and that same porridge which had been eaten without harm by his comrades, lay even in the mouth and the throat. The sin of this ending rested upon the superintendent, who

¹ *Burlakí* is the special term, and these men used to be obliged (before the introduction of steamers) to tow the barks against the stream. On the Volga, they towed them the whole distance from Astrakhan to Nizhni-Nóvgorod, to the Annual Fair. TRANSLATOR.

had not succeeded in driving the famishing "greedy" brethren away from the food in time. The lack of supervision was so great, that in another guild on the same day, two other men turned blue and fell back; these men did not die, thanks simply to the fact that there happened to be on hand an experienced man, who had seen such sights before. These men who had overeaten, were undressed to the skin and their bellies were held before a hot wood fire. Their companions watched the sweat stream off these heated bargees, and the men recovered, and got fat.

All of these scenes are well known among those who passed from chaff to bread; but simultaneously with them, other scenes of a sufficiently familiar character were enacted with those who remained without bread; all of a sudden, without rhyme or reason, devils began to make their appearance by night in the distant, unfrequented streets of the town. One such sudden devil, in full uniform of hell, with horns and claws, plundered two women, a drunken blacksmith, and an entirely sober clerk, who was on his way to a rendezvous with a merchant's daughter, of everything they had. The persons who had been robbed declared that the devil, into whose claws they had fallen, had the horns of a bull, and claws exactly like the iron hooks with which bargees spur on the bales when they are lading barks. No one any longer went about the town after the very first gleam of twilight, but the devil continued to haunt the streets, nevertheless; the watchman on guard at the salt magazines, and at the jail, saw him. He was even so bold that he walked up to the soldiers closer than gun-shot range, and piteously entreated of them a crust of bread. Night patrols were sent out, and one of them, under the command of the Commissioner of Police himself,—the old warrior Porókhontzeff with whom we have long been acquainted—actually encountered the devil, even challenged him but, on receiving from him the reply, "a friend" they were overcome with fright, and ran away. The cavalry captain, no longer relying upon the police, applied to Captain Poverdóvnya, and requested the co-operation of his squad of retired

veterans, in the immediate capture of the devil who was alarming the town; but the captain raised difficulties about entering upon any affair with an unclean spirit without having first asked special permission from his superiors, and meanwhile, the devil kept roaming about, and, at last, thoroughly terrorized the town. Archpriest Gratziánsky took a hand in the affair: he appealed to the populace in an address on superstition, in which he assured them that devils who took off people's kerchiefs and coats did not exist, and the devil who was strolling about the streets at night was, of course, no devil at all, but merely some idle miscreant who found it more convenient to rob people by frightening them in the costume of the devil. Violent wrath blazed up against the archpriest. The head-chorister of the Schismatic Prayer-house explained, that therein consisted the heresy of the new Church, and without any difficulty whatever, he won over to his sect several sheep from the Cathedral flock. The devil revenged himself upon Gratzíánsky for his denial in still another way: on the very next day after that sermon, tracks of dirty boots were observed on the ceiling in the anteroom of the archpriest's house. As a matter of course, this astonished and thoroughly frightened everybody: who could walk on the ceiling with his feet upside down? It was decided that no one else than the devil could do it, and the archpriest was powerless to alter the conviction even of his own wife on that point. In spite of his exhortations, the audacious demon enjoyed complete respect; no one could make up his mind to anger him, but, on the other hand, no one went into the street after dark.

But the devil overdid the business, and the result was very bad for him; he no longer reaped any harvest whatsoever on the streets. And then, in consequence of this, the robbery of copper crosses, folding triptychs of Saints, and shrine-lamps from the cemetery where Father Savély was interred under his pyramid, began.

The town, which had long been thoroughly frightened by various pranks on the part of the devil, without reasoning the

matter out, attributed this sacrilege also to the wiles of the enemy.

The people who came upon the thefts, observed, among other things, the damage inflicted on Savély's monument: the cross and the little, gilded dome which crowned the pyramid, were greatly injured by a crowbar, and loosened, but they still held on the strongly rivetted rod. On the other hand, one of the gilded Cherubim had been wrenched off, ruthlessly chopped up with an ax, and scornfully discarded as a thing possessed of no current value.

When he was informed of this, Akhilla inspected the disarranged monument, and said:

"Well, if you are Beelzebub himself, you shall pay for this!"

CHAPTER XIV

AT eleven o'clock on the following night, the deacon, without saying a word to any one, came out of his house, and wended his way to the cemetery. He had a long pole, and a stout hempen noose, in his hand.

Akhílla reached the churchyard just after eleven o'clock, having encountered no one, and having been seen by no one. He inspected the gates; they were fastened, and rattled a little in the fresh spring breeze. Evidently, the devil did not enter through these gates, and he must have another highway.

Akhílla turned aside, and with his pole tested the rotten snow, which filled the trench that surrounded the cemetery. The pole, piercing through the thin crust of ice, immediately made a plunge, and sank half its length. The ditch was about two and a half arshíns¹ deep, and on the other side of it ran a frozen slippery clay embankment.

Akhílla thrust his pole in more firmly, leaned upon it, and twining upward like a serpent, flew across to the other side of the trench. Akhílla accomplished this crossing successfully, but the pole upon which he had made his gigantic leap, would not bear the weight of his massive body, and broke at the very moment when the deacon's feet had just reached the embankment. Akhílla gave no thought to this; he hoped to find something else in the cemetery, which would render him the same service, with equal convenience, for his return trip; and, moreover, he was suddenly seized with that feeling which so easily takes possession of a man by night in a cemetery. One is not exactly terrified, but there is a certain tenseness about his soul, and all five senses begin to do their work keenly and

¹ Five feet, ten inches. TRANSLATOR.

penetratingly. Akhílla inhaled a huge draught of air, removed from his head his black cloth night-cap, and shaking his grey curls, he perceived with pleasure that the moon was flooding "God's acre" with its silvery light. He was sad in soul, and, at the same time, vigilant; he recalled the ancient years of his doughty deeds, now vanished, and glancing at the moon, he wafted it a waggish greeting:

"How are you, you little Kazák sun!"

Stillness, the sleep that knows no waking, a genuine place of repose! But now something uttered a sound like a sigh. . . . No, it was nothing in particular, it was the snow settling down. And Akhílla began to notice how the blackened snow was all rotting and undulating. This was a delusion of vision; little clouds were floating and crowding across the moon-lit sky, and casting a fleeting shadow on the earth. The deacon walked straight to Father Savély's grave, and sat down on it, leaning against one of the Cherubim. The stillness was unbroken, only the shadows flitted, flitted past, and there was no end to them.

Sleep began to oppress the deacon; he nestled as closely as possible to the pyramid, and fell into a doze, but not for long; it suddenly seemed to him as though some one were trampling loudly; Akhílla opened his eyes: everything was quiet, only the sky had undergone a change; the sky had paled to a half-light, and over Father Savély's pyramid one long, broad shadow was creeping. It was overcast and there was a smell of morning. Akhílla rose to his feet, and at that minute, again he thought he heard some one walking in the cemetery.

The deacon walked round the pyramid: no one was there.

There seemed to be something resembling recent foot-prints, but who could now distinguish a fresh track from one made yesterday, when the snow was all turned into a thin gruel, and a foot made an almost formless hole in it? The matutinal cocks were crowing in the town. No, certainly the devil would not be there that day. . . .

Akhílla wended his way back to the place where he had sprung over into the cemetery. He found an opening with-

out difficulty, and without particular thought grasped with his hand a pole which projected from the ditch, but remembered that he had broken his pole . . . then where had this whole pole come from?

"Remarkable!" thought the deacon, and having assured himself that the pole was not a delusion, but was really protruding from the trench, he was on the point of leaping across with it, when suddenly, from behind, over his shoulders, two enormous paws, covered with shaggy black hair, with huge, iron claws, fell on his breast.

The devil!

CHAPTER XV

AKHÍLLA swiftly bent down on his knees, and having, by this manœuvre got underneath the devil who had alighted upon him, he seized him by the paws, and pulled at them so powerfully, that the devil's chin came down with a bang on the crown of the deacon's head, and fairly clove fast to it. Not having anticipated such a reception, the devil began to stir about in lively fashion, but speedily comprehending the hopelessness of his efforts, he quieted down, and moaning dully, hung to the back of the deacon. He not only could not tear himself free, but he could not even utter a single word, because his jaws were crushed against the crown of Akhílla's head, as though in a vice. All the movements which the devil was able to make consisted of wagging his feet, but, on the other hand the demon used them with hellish art.

Akhílla, holding the devil on his back with as much ease as a healthy peasant carries a sheaf of pea-stalks, took several steps backward into the cemetery, and having made a little run, leaped across the canal, but the crafty devil took advantage of this moment, and cleverly wound his legs outspread in the air, around the legs of the deacon at the very moment when they were both over the ditch. Akhílla, thus unexpectedly entangled, lost his balance, and tumbled into the cold slush of the ditch, along with his burden.

The terrible cold almost made him unclasp his hands, and release the devil, but he controlled himself, and began to seek other means for safety. But, alas! there were none; the smooth banks of the ditch were covered with an icy crust, and it was impossible to climb up them without the aid of his hands, and freeing his hands meant letting the devil go.

This Akhilla would not do. He tried to shout, but either no one heard him, or, if any one heard him that person only locked himself in the more securely, saying to himself: "The devil is tearing some one again!"

The deacon understood that he could not hope for any help from the frightened populace, but he did not let go of the devil, and shivered with him in the ditch. Both were stiff with cold, and perhaps both would have died there, had not an accident delivered them.

Early in the morning, a sledge-train of spirits trailed along towards the town quay. As they drove along the road past the cemetery, the peasants noticed in the canal some unusual group or other, and came to a halt, but perceiving in it the blue face of a man over which reared the devil's horned snout, they fled. Half-frozen Akhilla, summoning all his powers, and calling to the peasants, ordered them to look after the devil, and himself raised his hand out of the canal and crossed himself.

"He's a baptized man, lads!" shouted the peasants, and dragging the deacon and the devil out of the trench, they thrust a straw into the bung of one of the casks, and placed the benumbed Akhilla at it, but threw the devil on the forepart of the sledge, and drove into town.

After sucking in a little of the spirits, the deacon shivered, and fell back on the sledge. He was in a frightful condition: he was wet through, blue as a kettle with cold, and could hardly draw his breath for shivering. The devil lay exactly like a frozen cabbage-stump; and in this benumbed condition they brought him to the town, where the deacon gave them a signal to halt in front of the courthouse.

Here Akhilla took the devil from the sledge, and ordering them to take him to the chancellery, he sent for the Commissioner of Police, and asking the janitor for a dry shirt and a soldier's coat, he changed his clothes, and lay down on the divan.

The town was already excited by the news, in spite of the early hour of the morning, and a dense crowd of people beat,

like the sea around a cliff, around the courthouse where Captain Porókhontzeff lived himself in government quarters. The people, making an uproar, pressed up to the porch, and broke against it, being anxious to see the devil who had split the Cherub, and also the deacon who had effected the capture of this devil,—a feat which, up to that time, no one had succeeded in performing. It was difficult to make one's way through that crowd, notwithstanding their rank and importance, even for the most influential people of the town, such as Archpriest Gratziánsky, Father Zakháriya, and Captain Poverdóvnya, and even they forced a passage merely because the crowd regarded the presence of the priests as a religious necessity in bringing the devil to justice, while Captain Poverdóvnya squeezed his way through with the aid of his sword-hilt, wherewith he administered blows right and left.

This officer also was extremely necessary here, and with all his valour, to boot, for the town was threatened with a riot.

CHAPTER XVI

WHILE the people seethed and surged below the house, which concealed the unusual apparition, no lesser bustle reigned inside the house itself. The Commissioner of Police, Captain Porókhontzeff, rushed out into the chancellery in his cotton sleeping-trousers and flannel jacket, and saw that, the devil, with horns and claws, was actually sitting on the floor, writhing in a ball, and that opposite him, on the petitioners' divan lay a huge mass covered over on top of the soldier's great-coat, with two sheepskin coats: this was the deacon.

Over the devil, in various attitudes, stood all the Stáry Górod aristocracy, but their countenances expressed not the slightest terror from the proximity of the demon. There was nothing to fear: any one could see that this devil was a miserable creature, shivering with cold, and wrapped up in the ancient rags of an old kazák felt circular, which Deacon Akhílla had given once upon a time, because of its utter worthlessness, to Commissioner Danílka. On the devil's head covered with the same felt circular, projected the horns of a cow, badly and carelessly tied on with a dirty cord, and on his hands, wrapped round with scraps of sheepskin with the wool outside, dangled two ordinary iron hooks, such as are used to hoist bales. And, what was strangest of all was, that one of the soldiers, thrusting his hand into the breast of the devil, drew thence, attached to a cord, an ancient copper cross, with the inscription, pressed into it: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be shattered."

"I told you that it was a hoax," remarked archpriest Gratziánsky.

"Yes, yes; in costume he is a perfect devil, but according

to the holy image, he is no devil at all," Zakháriya supported him, and immediately running up to that sphinx, he inquired: "See here, brother, who are you? Hey? Do you hear what I say? . . . My dear fellow! Hey? Do you hear? . . . Speak. . . . If you don't we'll whip you! . . . Speak! . . . " urged Zakháriya.

But at this point the Commissioner of Police intervened, and himself undertook to interrogate the devil, but with equal lack of success.

The devil, having begun to get warm, and come to himself, merely turned over quietly, and like a tortoise, withdrew still deeper into his felt cloak.

Different opinions were offered by different mouths, as to what ought now to be done with this devil. The Commissioner favoured despatching him, at once, just as he was, to the Governor, and cited in his own support the law concerning marvels and monsters; but the universal curiosity rebelled violently against this decision, and devised all sorts of arguments to convince the Commissioner of Police that it was indispensably necessary to undress the demon at once, and thereby satisfy the general, impatient, and burning curiosity.

Only two persons refrained from arguing: the Mayor and Father Zakháriya, but even they refrained merely because they were engaged in special investigations: the Mayor, a short, stout merchant, kept softly creeping close up to the devil, now on one side, now on the other, and stealthily making the sign of the cross over him, and then instantly skipping swiftly to one side, so that he might not sink through the floor with him, while Zakháriya pulled him about by the horns, and whispered under the felt cloak:

"Hearken, my good fellow, hearken to me: just tell me one thing,—was it you who walked on the archpriest's ceiling, with your feet in the air? Confess, and we will not whip you."

"Yes," groaned the devil dully.

This first word uttered by the demon produced an unexpected panic in those present, and this panic was augmented by the wild howls of the populace outside which reached their

ears at that moment. The crowd, having lost patience, was forcing its way upstairs, demanding that the devil should be produced before them that very instant, and at the same time, they loudly expressed the most vivid suspicion that the police were taking a bribe from the devil, and would allow him to go back to hell. There were men in the crowd who openly proposed that the doors of the government building should be taken from their hinges, and that the devil should be forcibly seized from the hands of the legal authorities. The threat was followed almost immediately by execution: blows on the doors resounded; but the Commissioner hit upon the right thing to do: he made a sign to the policeman, who immediately rolled out the fire-hose, climbed on the fence with the nozzle, and directed a cold, powerful stream on the crowd. A signal was given, and fun ensued. The people retreated for a minute, merry shouts, whistles and laughter rang out, but a moment later all these jolly people knit their brows, bit their lips, and advanced. The cold douche no longer scared any one, the door cracked, stones flew in through the windows, and the policeman was dragged down by the legs from the fence, and the people, taking possession of his nozzle, drenched him before the very eyes of the authorities. The Commissioner of Police, rushed into the inner rooms, and all the aristocracy who were with him followed him, and locked themselves in, and Captain Poverdóvnya, who had not succeeded in following them, thither, ran about the chancellery, shrieking:

“O Lord! It’s nothing! . . . Don’t be afraid! . . . God is with us! . . . Let any one who has weapons . . . save yourselves!”

And thereupon, espying the open door of the office closet, he nimbly sprang through it, and slammed it after him; and meanwhile, through the shattered windows, the stones rained in more obdurately than ever. A yell of horror and despair burst from the devil himself.

CHAPTER XVII

IT was a decisive moment: it awaited its hero, and he appeared. The fur-coats which covered Akhílla, who had been forgotten by every one, began to move, flew off upon the floor, and he himself, barefooted, in tight, short-tailed soldier's underclothing, investigated the man who had so recently seemed to be the devil, and on whose account had been raised all this uproar, which had now assumed the aspect of an open rebellion.

"Undress yourself!" commanded the deacon. "Undress yourself, and show what you are, or I'll pull all that stuff off you and the skin you were born in along with it."

And so saying, he nipped the devil as a mettlesome woman nips a scalded chicken.

One moment—and there was no longer any devil, but before the amazed deacon rolled the benumbed citizen Danílka.

Akhílla held him up to the window, and thrusting his head through the broken frame he shouted:

"Silence, you fools! It is Danílka who rigged himself out like the devil! Look at him—here he is!"

And the deacon, elevating before him Danílka, blue with cold, at the same time he tossed out into the street, one after another, the fragments of his outfit, shouting:

"Here are his claws! And here are his horns! And here you have his whole ammunition! And now you, just listen to me, I'll question him."

And turning Danílka round towards him, the deacon with profound and unfeigned good-nature, asked him:

"Why did you dress yourself up so abominably, you fool?"

"Because I was hungry," whispered the citizen.

Akhílla immediately repeated this to the people, and directly after that, trumpeted with his tremendous voice:

"Well, and now, disperse, ye Orthodox, if you don't, God save you, for if the authorities recover their courage they will immediately order you to be fired on."

The populace immediately dispersed, laughing merrily.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE authorities, as a matter of fact, did "recover courage," crawled forth and proceeded to make arrangements.

The dripping and hardly breathing Danílka was put into a dry convict smock, and seriously interrogated. He acknowledged that, hungry and cold, abandoned by every one, and persecuted by every one on account of his debauched life, he had walked and roamed about until, at last, he had hit upon the idea of dressing up as the devil, and had frightened the townsfolk by night, and had stolen whatever came to hand, had sold it to a Jew, and had fed himself with the proceeds. Akhílla listened to all this attentively. When the examination was finished, he still continued to stare at Danílka, and without any perceptible cause, began to notice that Danílka was now rising up and again sinking down, before his eyes. Akhílla winked his eyes violently, and then something new happened. Danílka now began to turn of a vivid golden hue, then silvery white, and fiery red, so that it was painful to look at him, and then, again, he would become extinguished altogether, so that he was not there at all, and still he was there. It was intolerably painful to follow all those kaleidoscopic changes, and yet if you closed your eyes, everything was still more variegated, and cut the sight even worse.

"Phew, what does this mean!" the deacon said to himself, and passing his hand across his face, he noticed that his palm, as it moved across the skin, rattled, and clung as cloth clings to flannel. Then came a moment of unconsciousness, a fiery current flamed swiftly through his blood, and beating upon his temples, obscured his memory. The deacon forgot why he was here, and why that Danílka was standing there like a

plucked chicken, and carelessly narrating how he had scored the people, how he had filched from them every sort of thing, and how, at last, quite unexpectedly, he had fallen into the hands of the father deacon.

"Well, but tell us," Zakháriya inquired of him again, "tell us, my good fellow, how you walked on the father archpriest's ceiling, with your feet upside down?"

"That was simple, *bátiushka*," replied Danílka, "I took off my boots, stuck a stick into their legs, and made the tracks on the ceiling."

"Come, let him go now, you have tormented him enough," remarked Akhílla unexpectedly, blinking his eyes.

They all stared at him in amazement.

"Why do you say that? How is it possible to release a man guilty of sacrilege?" Gratzíánsky stopped him.

"Well, what sacrilege is there about it? He did it because he was hungry. By heaven, release him, let him go home."

Gratzíánsky, without turning towards Akhílla, remarked that his intercession was out of place.

"Why . . . for a poor man, who was driven by hunger . . . the apostles plucked the ears of corn. . . ."

"But what do you mean by it?" interposed the archpriest severely: "Do you mean to say that you are a socialist?"

"What is there socialistic about that? The holy apostles, I tell you, as they went through the cornfield, plucked the ears and ate. Of course, you dignitaries of the town don't know that, but we children of the clergy, when we were in the school, often stole things to eat. Yes, release him, for Christ's sake, for anyway I won't let you have him."

"Have you gone crazy, pray? How dare you!" . . .

But these last words struck the deacon as so unendurably offensive, that he flushed a deep scarlet all over, and clasping his wet under-cassock to him, he shouted:

"I won't give him up to you, and that's all there is to it! He's my prisoner, and I hold all the rights over him."

Thereupon the deacon stalked up to Danílka, reeling as he went, shoved him through the door, and grasping the jambs

with both his hands, in order to prevent any one following Danílka out, he tried to say something more, but immediately became conscious that he was growing tall and broad, flaming with sultry heat, and vanishing. He closed his eyes for a minute, and at that self-same minute fell senseless to the floor.

Akhílla's condition was that sweet condition of unconsciousness which fever bestows upon a man. The deacon heard the words, "turbulence," "deposition," "apoplectic stroke," felt them touch him, turn him over, raise him up; he heard the bustle and the tearful entreaties of Danílka, who had been captured again in the street, but he heard it all as though in a dream, and again he shot upwards, again he spread out somewhere interminably, and felt delightfully flaming and burning in fiery illness. Here it was, the end of his life, *death*.

The proper deposition concerning Akhílla's performance was drawn up, and "old provost" Vóin Porókhontzeff cogitated and exercised his craft over it, in the endeavour to present the deacon's sally in the most gentle and innocent light possible, but nevertheless, the affair was entitled: "*Concerning the insolent disturbance, perpetrated in the presence of the Stáry Górod Police Authorities, by Akhílla Desnitzin, Deacon of the Cathedral.*"

Captain Porókhontzeff was only able to strike out the word "insolent," but Akhílla's "disturbance" became the subject of an affair which, sooner or later, was bound to entail a severe indictment.

CHAPTER XIX

AKHÍLLA knew nothing of this: he was quietly and tranquilly burning up in the fire of his ailment on a bed of sickness. The doctor, who had taken the deacon to the hospital, declared that he had virulent typhus fever, beginning immediately with unconsciousness and burning heat, and that such cases force the physician to predict the most melancholy outcome.

Captain Porókhontzeff caught at these words, and demanded from the doctor a decision: Was it not proper to attribute Akhílla's act to the beginning of his ailing condition? The doctor undertook to certify this. It was the fifth day that Akhílla was lying unconscious, with the same dim but agreeable visions, and with the same incessant sensation of luxurious heat. Before him, on a fragile chair, sat father Zakháriya, holding on the head of the sick man a towel wet with cold water. In the evening, several acquaintances and the doctor arrived.

The deacon was lying with closed eyes, but he heard the doctor say, that any one who wished to deal with the soul of the sick man, ought to seize the first moment of his recovering consciousness, because the crisis was at hand, and after that, nothing favourable was to be anticipated.

"Don't let that moment slip," said he, "his pulse is already very weak," and then the doctor began to chat with Porókhontzeff and the others, who, when they had come to visit Akhílla, could not, in the least, realize that he was at death's door, and moreover, that he would die from a cold! He, the gigantic epic hero, would die, while Danílka, who had shared the cold bath with him, was sitting in prison as healthy as possible. The doctor explained this by the fact that Akhílla had long been violently shaken and out of order.

"Yes, yes, yes, you said . . . that he had exalted sensibilities," stammered father Zakháriya.

"A strange illness," remarked Porókhontzeff, "and a perfectly new one! I have lived a very long time, but I never heard of any such malady before."

"Yes, yes, yes," Zakháriya supported him, "the customs of life grow more refined, and the maladies grow more complicated."

The deacon gently opened his eyes, and whispered:

"Give me a drink!"

They gave him a metal jug, to which he applied his burning lips, and eagerly quaffing the moor-berry beverage,¹ he gazed at them all with swollen eyes.

"Well, our dear organ,² how are you now?" the Mayor asked him, sympathetically.

"I'm all stuffed up," replied the deacon heavily, and, a minute later, quite unexpectedly, he began to narrate, in a conversational tone: "After my little dog 'What'syourname' died . . . when he was run over by a wagon-wheel during the short fast, I wanted to buy myself another dog. . . . On the Nevsky Prospekt, in Petersburg, I saw a dog pedlar, and I said to him, 'Get me a nice, little dog.'— But he said:

"'There aren't any dogs now-a-days, they're all pointers and setters.' . . . 'And what sort of beasts may those be?' said I. . . . 'Why, they're dogs, all the same, only with a different name.'"

The deacon paused.

"Why are you telling us this?" the doctor asked the sick man, in a bold, encouraging tone, for he thought Akhílla was raving.

"So that you may understand about the new diseases: all of

¹ The *kliúkva*, a tiny northern cranberry, rich in juice, is used for a most refreshing beverage, like lemonade, as well as for a delicious confection, when each berry is encased in a thin shell of sugar. TRANSLATOR.

² The Mayor referred to his deep bass voice—probably a basso profundo. Deacons—especially Archdeacons of a Cathedral Staff—are chosen, more or less because of their voices. TRANSLATOR.

them . . . call them what you like, lead to one place—to death. . . .”

And thereupon the deacon relapsed into unconsciousness, and did not wake again until midnight, when he suddenly began to talk deliriously.

“Archer, archer . . . go away, archer!”

And as he uttered the last word, he sprang up and becoming wide awake, he sat up on his bed.

“Deacon, make your confession,” Zakháriya said to him gently.

“Yes, I must do that,” said Akhílla; “begin it quickly, —I will confess so that I may forget nothing,—I am guilty of everything, forgive me, for Christ’s sake,” and then he added, with a sigh, “Send quickly for the Father Archpriest.”

Gratziánsky did not keep him waiting long.

Akhílla greeted the archpriest from afar with his eyes, received his blessing and kissed his hand twice.

“I am dying,” he said, “I wanted to ask you to forgive me; I am guilty of all sins.”

“May God forgive you, and do you forgive me,” replied Gratziánsky.

“I have never borne malice . . . but I have not always been coherent in my reasoning. . . .”

“Why put yourself to confusion? You have a noble heart. . . .”

“No, it is not worth while . . . to say that,” interrupted the deacon, getting entangled.— “I have never busied myself with the proper things . . . and, towards the last, I got angry about the monument. . . . An empty whim; heaven and earth shall be consumed, and everything will be destroyed. What mattered the monument! It was just my foolishness!”

“He is wise, nevertheless!” let fall Zakháriya, bowing his head.

“Forgive me, for Christ’s sake,” he said hastily, “and do not feel obliged to remain here—the fever is gripping me again. . . . Farewell!”

The learned archpriest blessed the dying man, and Zak-

háriya went to escort Gratziánsky to the door, but as he crossed the threshold on his return, he was petrified with horror.

Akhílla was in the death-agony, an agony which was not so much terrible as it was extraordinary: he would lie quiet for a few seconds, and drawing the air into his lungs, would suddenly let it escape, emitting a long-drawn: "oo-oo-oo-ookh! each time flourishing his arms, and half raising himself up, as though he were trying to free himself of something, as though throwing off something.

Zakháriya gazed at him benumbed, while the frail boards of the bed bent and cracked with increasing force beneath the dying Akhílla, and the wall, through which a long-confined, elementary power seemed to be straining for space, trembled painfully.

"Is not this the end?" said Zakháriya to himself, and ran to get his little book of prayers from the window-sill, but at that moment, Akhílla shouted, through his clenched teeth:

"Who art thou, with thy face of fire? Get out of my path!"

Zakháriya glanced timidly about him, and was panic-stricken: he saw no one with fiery face, but it seemed to him, in his terror, that Akhílla had flown out of himself, and had wrestled somewhere hereabouts with some one, and had overcome him. . . .

The timid old man trembled all over, and shutting his eyes, ran out of the room, and, a few minutes later, the cathedral bell began to toll mournfully for the dead Akhílla.

CHAPTER XX

THE Stáry Górod Chronicle nears its close, and its last full stop must be a nail driven into the coffin-cover of Father Zakháriya.

The gentle old man did not long survive Savély and Akhílla. He lived only through the Great Fast¹ in the spring, until the Bright Sunday, then gently fell asleep during divine service.

The time had come for an entirely new Cathedral Staff in Stáry Górod.

¹ The Great Fast = Lent. . . . The Bright Sunday = Easter. TRANSLATOR.

THE END

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